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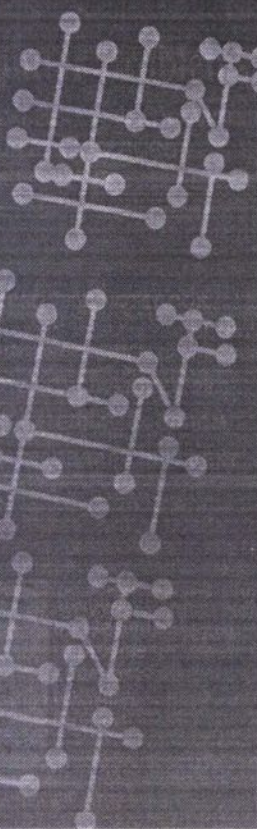
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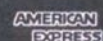
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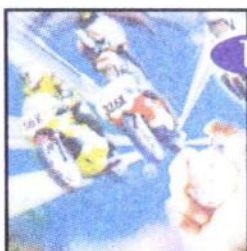


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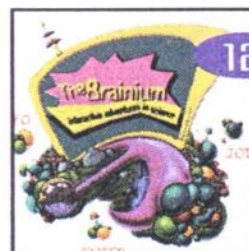
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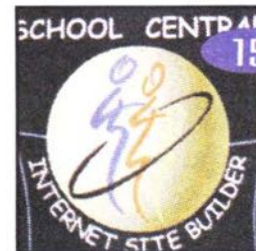
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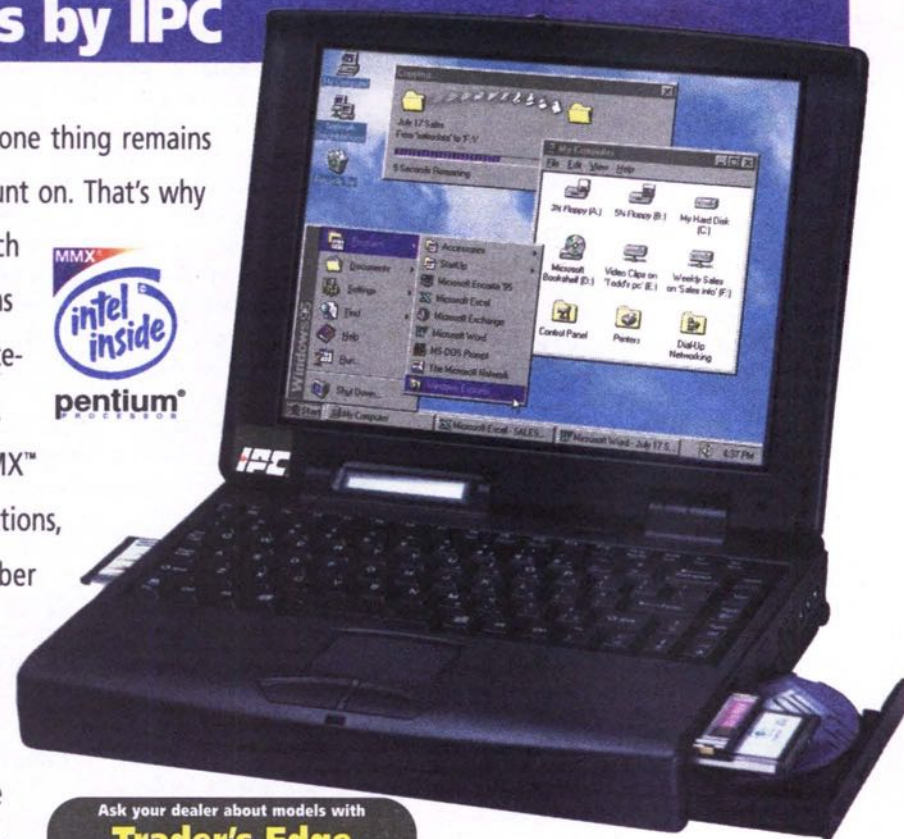
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COPY EDITOR Doug Yovanovich

PRODUCTION MANAGER Sari Prelutsky

PRODUCTION Jason Edmunds,

Jennifer FitzGerald, Sherly Ho,

Alexandra Morris, Lisa Wilder

ADVERTISING SALES

Jamie Leighton, jamie@tcp.ca

Randy Chaster, randy@tcp.ca

DISTRIBUTION Brian Gold

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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Mara Gulens

MANAGING INTERIM EDITOR Lara Thais King

ART DIRECTOR Jennifer Hanlon-Scott

COPY EDITOR William Wood

Computer Player!

425 Carrall St., Suite 503, Vancouver, BC V6B 6E3

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The future is coming—a few years early

Letter from the editor



At the Seybold Publishing 97 conference in San Francisco in September, Microsoft chairman Bill Gates outlined his vision of a "Web lifestyle" that would see people using the World Wide Web for entertainment, shopping, banking, communications, news and other information gathering.

Gates predicted that this lifestyle will be achieved when 50 percent of Americans are using the Web in the manner he outlined. He said that

would happen in ten years.

However, according to recent figures on the rate of growth of Internet and Web usage internationally, Gates may soon have to be downgraded from visionary to realist.

International Data Corp. (IDC) researchers found that 53.2 million people were using the Internet at the end of September, with 44.2 million of those people also using the Web. At the end of 1996, IDC counted 34 million Internet users and 27.6 million people using the Web.

IDC researchers predict the number of Internet users will top 60 million and the Web will break the 50 million user barrier by the end of 1997. These predictions, if realized, represent a near doubling of users in a single year.

In clocking the pace of change, IDC also predicts the combined number of purchases made via the Web will top one million per day by year end. And the total amount of goods and services purchased this year will surpass \$10 billion.

So what?

So nothing! You can live quite a full life connected only to your existing, non-virtual network of family, friends and colleagues. I led such a blissful, non-wired existence myself until two years ago. I had heard whispers of the existence of this parallel, virtual universe but paid it no mind.

In hindsight, I can see that it would have made a difference, nothing dramatic, just tweaking things a little in my favour. Before moving back to Vancouver two and a half years ago, I was living in St. John's, Nfld., a rather, ahem, isolated location. Had I an email connection, I would have had daily contact with family and friends in Vancouver and all stops in between, and I might saved a few bucks on phone bills.

Now that I'm back in Vancouver and have email, I frequently hear from my friends in Canada's easternmost province, something that might not have happened if they or I had to rely on letter writing.

Your letters please

Letters on issues raised in the paper or general computer topics are welcome. Please be brief. We regret that we are unable to look up stories from past issues, suggest products, or solve all your computer problems. Only those with names and e-mail or snail-mail addresses will be published. Letters may be edited for space or content.

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Linux fan speaks

Glad to see a Linux set of articles ("What is Linux?" October issue). I've had various versions of Linux for a number of years now, to play with in my spare time.

Originally it was a challenge just to get everything installed and working: X, telnet, PPP, and so forth. But the latest versions are so simple to install that the challenge has left. I installed Slackware 3.2 faster than I installed Windows! I even have an icon on my Windows desktop that I can click, and it causes a Windows shutdown, and up comes Linux.

As far as the other elements of the Web lifestyle, the only online transaction I've made to date is ordering a subscription from *Utne Reader* and I paid the bill the old-fashioned way—by sending a cheque via snail mail. But now that I have linked my home computer to the Internet, I'm eager to try online banking services. I think I'll wait to get my entertainment from the Web, however. A lot of the interactive action appears to be gaming related and I just don't fit the young male target demographic.

In this issue

If you do fit this demographic you'll be interested in our game coverage this month. It fits in with the Internet focus of this issue, as our game boy, Marc Saltzman, documents the top 10 gaming-related Web sites (see page 51).

Continuing the Internet theme, Maureen MacNeill takes a look at how two Vancouver developers, Multiactive Technologies (see page 12) and Family Ware International (see page 15), are designing innovative educational Web sites and services that are already being used in B.C. schools.

Paul Angyal also offers some advice on picking an Internet service provider for those about to take the plunge into online life (see page 29).

We also review a key tool for connection: the modem. Although the variety of Internet access modes is broadening—including cable, satellite, and more recently successful high-speed transmission via existing power lines in the United Kingdom—most people still use a modem. Lynn Greiner tests the latest 56K models (see page 10).

Winning words

As well, in our attempt to find out what you think, we are running a contest this month. The task: in 100 words or less tell us what you love or hate about the Internet. The prize: the new Canadian Geographic CD-ROM—and the winner will get it just in time for Christmas. Turn to page 34 for details and to page 26 for examples of love/hate tales from the Net.

And though there may not be a reward attached, if there is anything else you love or hate, let us know what you think about that too.

Megan Johnston, Associate Editor
meganj@tcp.ca

Showing that to other Windows users gets an interesting reaction.

Keep up the good work!

Todd Wongkee

Editor's note: We are running the second part of the article on Linux in this issue. Check out page 32

ISP quest

What does it take to find a good ISP? I have had five in the last year or so, and for one reason or another I have got rid of them.

One of my big issues are with newsgroups. All I ever hear is, "Oh yes we have the best feeds with over 30,000 groups." That's all fine and dandy, but if there are no articles in these groups, they are useless, and this is what I am finding.

My second problem is with unlimited service. Recently I have been using the Internet quite a bit and need this service, but I am also on a limited budget. What I seem to find here is that most ISPs have a three-hour limit and then you get disconnected. Sure, you can dial back in, but this is not what I am paying for. I have also found that you get disconnected a lot in prime-time hours. I never had this problem with an hourly limited account.

The last thing is price—most of these ISPs want you to pay first and last month, plus a setup fee. I don't have \$100 to toss around

to start with, and I refuse to pay a setup fee. This to me is just money grabbing and you get nothing for it. The other problem I have with this is that if their service sucks, you are out that money—they will not refund you. I have lost a lot of money this way.

So that's it—I would be interested in what you or your readers have to say. Oh, one last thing. Is there a regulatory board for ISPs?

Corey Reeve

Editor's note: Perfect timing, Corey. Hopefully, our Internet issue will help you out! Our first feature this month is on choosing an Internet service provider.

Kudos for Kevin

I thoroughly enjoy your [Kevin Linfield's] OS/2 Ready column in the *Computer Player!* Also, I enjoy the "You Asked Us..." column. Thanks for the good work and keep it up! These columns are the main reason I look for this paper. Being a reseller, I get a lot of free publications sent to me as well as a lot of email subscriptions etc. However, it's very refreshing to see a fairly well-balanced representation of OS/2, IBM, etc. in the main stream computer press. I find many of your info bits very interesting and I'm sure that newcomers to OS/2 must as well.

Cheers!

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NetNations becomes Premier Gold Partner with InterNIC

Vancouver's NetNation has signed a Gold Premier Partner agreement with InterNIC—the entity responsible for the registration and administration of common Internet domain names. The Web hosting business is the first Canadian company to enter into this agreement with InterNIC, and is one of only 17 such partners worldwide, joining the ranks of Netcom, AOL Primehost, EarthLink and others.

NetNation's customers now receive specialized, streamlined domain registration service. NetNation has direct access to InterNIC's database, allowing domain registration within 24 hours instead of a waiting period of up to three weeks.

According to NetNation's vice-president of marketing, Joseph Kilbur, "InterNIC offers this arrangement to a limited number of Internet service providers [ISPs] or Web hosting companies that consistently register large quantities of Internet domain names. We're possibly the largest domain registrar in Canada, with about 1,000 registrations a month."

You can find NetNation on the Web at <http://www.netnation.com>. —/C

Government blue pages online

BC Tel and Dominion Directory are providing listings for more than 23,000 federal, provincial, regional and municipal government offices through a hot link at on the BC Yellow Pages Web site. The listings, which will be updated monthly, can be viewed at www.bcyellowpages.com.

Richmond computer company helps match organ donors with recipients

Thanks to a gift from ComputerHelp Resources of Richmond, Canadians waiting for organ transplants will soon be matched with donors via a specially designed Internet application. The project was conducted in co-operation with the Toronto-based Canadian Procurement Programs and the 12 regional bodies known as MORE (Multiple Organ Retrieval and Exchange).

ComputerHelp Resources designed and donated a real-time national waiting list for transplant recipients for non-renal organs—liver, heart, lung, heart/lung, small bowel and pancreas. This user-friendly intranet-based system is designed to make it easier and faster to match donors with recipients.

According to ComputerHelp Resources president, Andrew Levine, "Matches were being done manually. The regional MORE organizations circulated their weekly lists by fax. With that method, there were holdups, delays and always the risk of lost information and human error. With this new database, matches across Canada will be made immediately."

Challenges included the need to accommodate complex medical information in the database and the necessity to build sophisticated security measures into the system so as to completely ensure privacy and confidentiality. The final phase of the project will involve the provision of computer training to

personnel from the MORE groups.

Are the organizations pleased? "Ecstatic!" remarked Levine. "It's a Canadian first—the

first time this technology has been implemented to meet such a very real need."

ComputerHelp is on the Web at

<http://www.computerhelp.ca>, or call 604-244-8352 for more information. —/C

continued on page 8

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continued from page 7

Vancouver origami master creates online community

Vancouver's Joseph Wu is Canada's only origami master, and he's sharing his expertise with the world through his Web site. Origami is the Japanese-Chinese art of folding paper into 3D shapes depicting animals, people, structures, mythological creatures or almost any other imaginable object.

Wu says, "The site is by default the Internet's official origami Web site. You can learn to do origami—the instructions are there for many projects. It's not only my own work; other people send me material to post, photographs, instructions, occasionally an article. It's frequently updated with new material. I've just returned from a conference in York, England, so there'll be lots of new content and photos to add. I also maintain a semi-official list of origami links on the Web."

The site is well received by those with an interest in origami, averaging about 4,000

page hits a day. In one week, 11,000 requesting domains were served 31,000 pages from international addresses, including such distant locales as Jordan, Bulgaria, Nicaragua and Romania.

Wu, who is self-taught, has consulted on origami for film, television and advertising industries across North America.

You can view his origami creations and those of other origami enthusiasts at <http://origami.net/homes/jwu>. —/C

Wave sweeps Vancouver schools

Rogers Cable has connected the first of ten Vancouver schools to the Internet via its high-speed Wave service. Following the 10-school pilot project, the Vancouver School Board plans to connect all of its schools to the cable service. The speed of Wave connection at 10 Mbps is dramatically faster than traditional modem access rates of 33.6 to 56Kbps and requires no dial up.

For the 10-school pilot project, each school in the project is provided with cable modems, and the technology required to link a computer to the cable network, which links school computers to the Internet via

Rogers' fibre optic network. Networking capability within each school, including individual email addresses, is being provided by IBM.

MC2 Learning Systems teams up with Industry Canada's SchoolNet

Industry Canada's SchoolNet has recognized MC2 Learning Systems of Burnaby as a leader in the development of educational network technologies, and has negotiated a discount with MC2 to provide a leading-edge technology to all registered SchoolNet schools and libraries in Canada.

The technology is Zebu™ software, a refinement of Alive Pages, MC2's Web authoring tool used to support collaborative project-based learning for K-12 classrooms. With Zebu™, teachers and students can create, publish, and participate in interactive, online projects without knowledge of any programming language. The beta version 1.7 is scheduled for mid-October.

MC2, housed at Simon Fraser University (SFU), develops and markets Internet- and intranet-based software for the elementary and secondary school education market. Supported by the National Research Council of Canada, the Science Council of B.C. and the researchers at SFU, MC2 has gained international recognition as a leader in its field. MC2 software grew out of the Alive! Project, a cooperative research venture between SFU and MC2.

In April, MC2 received funding approval from Canarie (an industry-led and managed consortium) to proceed with a Collaborative Learning Project in Prince Edward Island. The project is expected to result in a significant change in how curriculum is delivered nationally, with one integrated tool allowing teachers to collect resources, construct interactive online learning environments, and use common assessment tools to evaluate outcomes.

SchoolNet is a collaborative initiative of the federal and provincial governments, education associations and the private sector to promote the effective use of information technology amongst Canadians. MC2 is online at <http://www.mc2.sfu.ca>. —/C

Set sail and empty your coffers

With the announcement that the BC Ferries Corporation is raising the price on most of its routes, you may be cheered to hear that you can now refuel your wallet onboard. The corporation and VanCity Credit Union have introduced wireless automated teller machines (ATMs) that use special software to encrypt a customer's request, send information via BC Tel Mobility's Cellular Digital Packet Data network, and connect to the database of the customer's financial institution. The ATMs will only be available on two of the larger Spirit vessels for the first year.

continued on page 20

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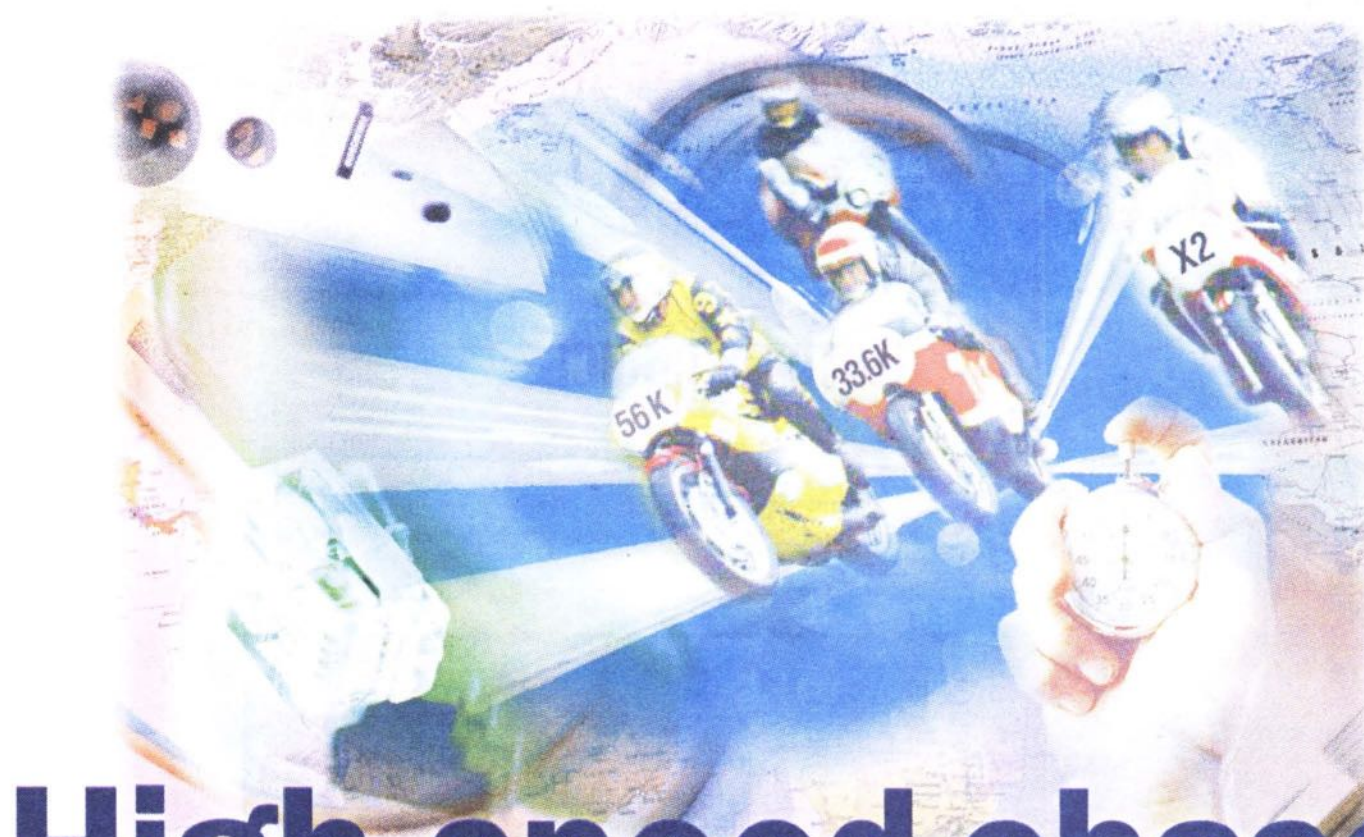
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High-speed chase

CP! clocks 56K modem contenders

BY LYNN GREINER

Under review:

GVC Speakerphone Modem
Hayes Accura Speakerphone 56K
IBM 33.6K PCMCIA modem
Megahertz 56K PCMCIA
Motorola ModemSURFR 56K
US Robotics Sportster 56K Voice/Fax
Zoom/FaxModem 56Kx

These days, the all-consuming passion of online users is the Internet. We connect to it at work, over our companies' local area networks, and at home (if we're lucky and live in the right places) over high-speed cable lines or satellite downlinks.

Okay, I'm exaggerating (or dreaming). When most of us talk about connecting to the Internet from home, we mean over a dial-up telephone line. And that means, using a modem.

A modem (an acronym for MOdulator/DEModulator) is a device that sits between a computer and a telephone line, translating computer signals, which are strictly on/off, to continuous waves that can travel over an analogue telephone line, and back again. The theoretical "speed limit" over telephone lines means that the fastest modem can transmit and receive at 33.6Kbps.

What about 56Kbps, you ask? Well, it's a technical cheat (it's actually only 53Kbps, for now, thanks to U.S. regulations). It also only works under specific conditions, and it only hits that speed one-way (and so is referred to as asymmetrical)—from your Internet service provider (ISP) to you. What you send back meanders along at a mere 28.8 or 33.6Kbps.

Unidentical twins

There are two competing would-be standards in the 56K world: x2, from US Robotics (3Com), and K56Flex, developed by Rockwell and Lucent. They are not compatible, so when you're shopping for a 56K modem, be sure you're buying the flavour supported by your ISP, and insist that your modem of choice offers some sort of upgrade path once a standard is decided upon. A flash upgrade is best—that means you will simply download a file and reprogram the modem for the new standard in a matter of minutes. If the manufacturer promises to send you a new chip, or swap the modem, you'll be forced to endure delays (weeks—maybe months) while supplies are obtained and sent out.

As a matter of fact, a flash upgradable modem is a good idea in any case. It enables manufacturers to add enhancements, or fix glitches, quickly and cheaply.

Almost all modems sold today also offer fax capability; some even provide what's essentially a voice mail system as well. Most come in internal and external versions.

We looked at a collection of modems supporting both types of 56K technology, and one that's simply a serviceable 33.6Kbps unit. Testing was done by connecting to several ISPs, plus a corporate remote-access facility, and looking at connection speeds, reliability of the connection, and performance. K56Flex speeds were tested thanks to Internet Direct, while x2 connectivity was courtesy of Netcom Canada.

Now, the modems.

GVC Speakerphone Modem

Type: Internal
Technology: x2
Price: \$169

This was the sole internal unit in our roundup. It supports the x2 version of 56K (GVC also offers K56Flex models). In a Plug and Play system, installation is straightforward: stuff the card into a free ISA slot, and start the machine. You need to download the Unimodem V driver for Windows 95 (unless you're running OSR 2) to use the voice telephony features, which include a full-duplex speakerphone (both parties can talk at once, as on a real phone, not one at a time, like on a radio). With Windows 3.1, you have to resort to fiddling with jumpers. Connections were solid and reliable. GVC offers a lifetime warranty.

Hayes Accura Speakerphone 56K

Type: External
Technology: K56Flex
Price: \$229 (less \$56 mail-in rebate)

This model supports K56Flex. Installation under Windows 95 was a straightforward matter of plugging the unit into a serial port and starting the system; Windows 95 detected it and asked for its driver disk. Unlike most modems, the unit has a 9-pin serial connector on it, but Hayes supplies an adapter, so you don't have to buy a new modem cable.

It ships with SmartCom Message Center LE and a CD-ROM full of online service signups. Documentation is sparse, although there's a large help file on the driver diskette.

Conventional connections were reliable, but 56Kbps was almost unachievable—I suspect

the culprit was the not-yet-standard "standard." Hayes offers a five-year warranty.

IBM 33.6K PCMCIA modem

Type: PCMCIA
Price: \$356

This—the only 33.6 Kbps modem in our review—is a voice/ data/faxmodem for your



average notebook computer. It installed seamlessly, and communicated at its full rated speed, with no problems. As an added bonus, you can use it with a cell phone (with the addition of the appropriate cable) for true wireless communications.

The unit uses an XJack connection that clicks in and out like the top of a ballpoint pen; you plug an ordinary telephone cord into it—no special "tail" is required (on the downside, XJacks are a bit fragile, and can be snapped off by the heavy handed). It comes with Cheyenne BitWare voice/data/fax software for Windows.

IBM provides a five-year warranty.

Megahertz 56K PCMCIA modem

Type: PCMCIA,
Technology: x2
Price: \$409.

This is an x2 unit, also with XJack (Megahertz developed the XJack). It, too, supports cellular input, and can act as a speakerphone (only half duplex, though), or answering machine.

Installation was simple, and, as with its 33.6Kbps predecessor, the modem functioned flawlessly in all connections. Megahertz (now part of 3Com) didn't sacrifice any of the unit's old features when it added 56K, which also functioned at full-rated speed.

Motorola ModemSURFR 56K



Type: External
Technology: K56Flex
Price: \$160-\$200

This model is a plain little box with slots on the bottom so it can be hung on a wall. There's no power switch, and no external volume control, and the default volume is loud. Hookup was easy—the instructions are very well done—although most of the documentation is on CD-ROM. Windows 95 talked to it happily.

The connections were solid, although the best speed I got was 44Kbps (overall K56Flex was not as speedy as x2 in my tests). On non-56K lines, the unit achieved 28.8Kbps.

US Robotics Sportster 56K Voice/Fax

Type: External

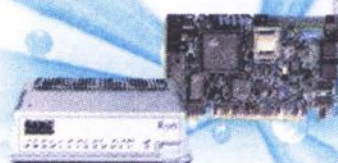
Technology: x2

Price: \$399

This is USR's consumer x2 model (the Courier is the higher-end model), but it doesn't lack features. It has integrated voice mail, as well as the usual data and fax capabilities, and a CD-ROM full of software ranging from ISP signup offers and Internet tools to a copy of Federal Express's online shipping program.

There's a nice, (comparatively) fat manual explaining how to set the unit up, which also provides a glossary of communications terminology, plus lists of the modem registers (memory locations) that one can occasionally tweak to improve performance, and the "AT" initialization commands. This sort of information isn't supplied often enough anymore!

On a 56K connection, it achieved a solid 53Kbps (the legal maximum) on one occasion, and consistently provided connections at 51Kbps.



Zoom/FaxModem 56Kx

Type: External

Technology: K56Flex

Price: US\$199

This model is a Motorola modem in disguise (the installation disks still say "Motorola," in fact, and Windows 95 refers to it as a ModemSURFR), but it remedies many of the deficiencies of the Motorola-branded unit. It has a power switch, and a 25-pin connector, and its indicator lights include one that shows when you've hit the magic 56K (K56Flex flavour) protocol.

It comes with a litter of software, including WinFax Lite, COMit, and signups for the major online services. Connections were in the 42 to 44Kbps range, and rock solid.

COMPUTER PLAYER! COMPUTER PLAYER! COMPUTER PLAYER! COMPUTER PLAYER! EDITOR'S CHOICE

Because the two distinct types of 56K modem are not interchangeable, and many ISPs only one or the other, we selected an Editor's Choice for each technology.

In the K56Flex camp, the Zoom/Fax

Modem was head and shoulders above the others for features and usability. An external volume control would be nice, though.

US Robotics developed x2, so it's probably no surprise that the Editor's Choice here is the Sportster. Its reliable, high-speed connections and consistent performance, plus bonuses such as the software bundle and excellent reference manual, make it a winner. ♦

Site seeing:

GVC, <http://www.gvc.ca>

Hayes, <http://www.hayes.com>

IBM, <http://www.networking.ibm.com/mod/modprod.html>

Megahertz, <http://x2.usr.com>

Motorola, <http://www.mot.com>

US Robotics, <http://x2.usr.com>

Remote-control software

PCAnywhere 32, from Symantec
RapidRemote, from Quarterdeck
LapLink for Windows NT/95, from Traveling Software

If you're a computer user both at home and at the office, chances are you've needed something from one machine while you're at the other. And if you do technical support, wouldn't it be nice to be able to control the user's machine from a distance so you can run diagnostics and find out what's wrong without leaving your desk?

Remote control software makes it all possible. It lets you connect to a computer (over the LAN or via modem or direct cable) and control it as though you were sitting at its keyboard. You see what's happening on its screen, and can run its software, or copy files to your local system, or map drives over a dialup line as though you were networked to the remote machine.

Personality conflicts

Since these programs intercept keyboard and monitor information and redirect it through the modem, they've typically been a tad cranky and unstable. But the latest crop, particularly those running under Windows 95, are much nicer to deal with. We briefly looked at three products. Two—Symantec's PCAnywhere, and Traveling Software's LapLink NT/95—are similarly priced at around \$200. The third, Quarterdeck Rapid Remote, is a "light" product that can be purchased on its own for under \$100, or as part of the Procomm Plus communications suite.

The award for most improved remote software has to go to PCAnywhere, version 8.0. The last version I tried was glacially slow, and rather

unstable, so I wasn't prepared for the relatively brisk performance of the current version (over a dialup link, your expectations must be lowered). It also contains nice touches, such as a utility that allows you to make installation diskettes for use on systems without CD-ROM drives.

You get software for Windows 95, Windows NT, and Windows 3.1, plus a special parallel cable for direct connections and a copy of CU-SeeMe.

When I think of LapLink, I always think of the program I used to move files over a direct cable connection from notebook to desktop and back. LapLink still does that (there's a special serial cable in the box), but it's also a capable remote-control program as well, offering good speed and stable dial-up connections.

Its security is a tad doubtful, though. When you save an entry in its dialing directory, it stores your password in plain text.

Software for Windows NT and 95 is packaged together; there's a separate version for Windows 3.1. As with PCAnywhere, you can make installation diskettes from the CD-ROM.

We looked at Rapid Remote for Windows 95 a few months ago (check out back issues at our Web site <http://www.computer-player.com>). Its only quirk was, and is, in its screen refresh, which tends to be unreliable, leaving bits of display from previously run software lying around. But it's quick, small, inexpensive, and reliable. —Lynn Greiner

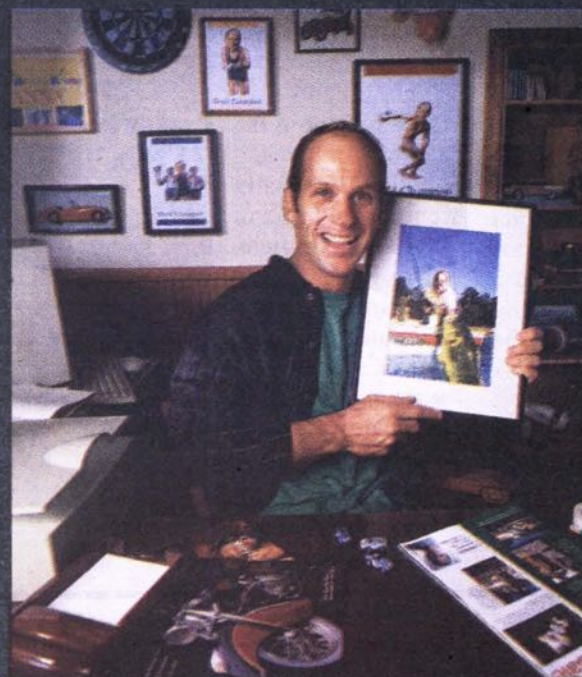
Site seeing:

Symantec Corporation, <http://www.symantec.com>

Quarterdeck, <http://www.qdeck.com>

Traveling Software, <http://www.travsoft.com>

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Brainium 'a virtual field trip'

Online resource helps make science current, exciting

BY MAUREEN MACNEILL

This term Bob Waugh's Grade 5 students have already learned about Monserrat's volcano, Amelia Earhart's female corycat, and discussed the pros and cons of the V-chip.

Science has become exciting and current for his students with topics such as these through a one-of-a-kind Internet-accessed program called the Brainium, says Waugh.

Conceived because of a shortfall in science funding, the Brainium was designed to get as many students involved in science as possible, especially those between Grades 4 to 8, says Dr. David Vogt, one of the minds behind the project and its current director of content development.

"We can reach all people," says Vogt. "We realized when we finished the prototype that we had something unique in B.C., Canada, and the world."

Waugh, who teaches at Wix-Brown Elementary in Langley, has been making full use of the program.

"The kids like it because the material on there is up-to-date," says Waugh, who has been involved in the Brainium for about a year as a consultant of sorts, supplying feedback to its designers about what he would like to see and what works for his students.

Because his school is not hooked up to the Internet, Waugh uses his home computer to copy stories, illustrated with graphics or photos, and brings them to his students,

creating discussions and projects.

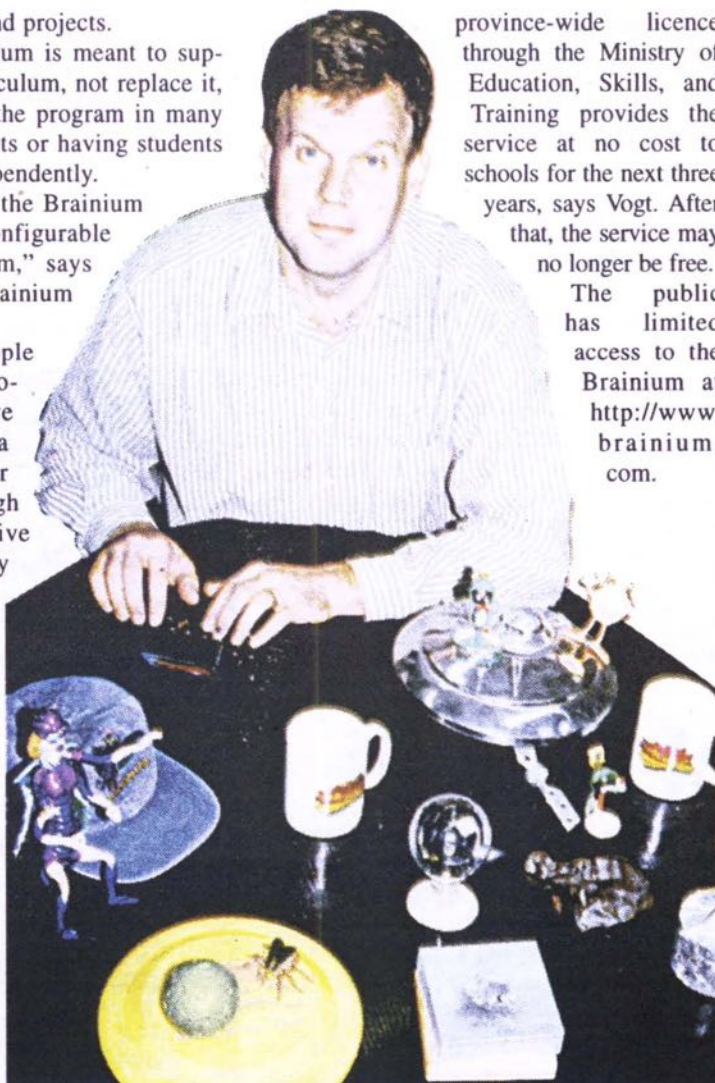
Vogt says the Brainium is meant to supplement the core curriculum, not replace it, and teachers can use the program in many ways, assigning projects or having students explore a subject independently.

"One of the joys of the Brainium is it's completely reconfigurable to anyone's curriculum," says Vogt, who calls the Brainium a "virtual field trip."

Twenty key people involved in the program's inception five years ago work from a downtown Vancouver base, says Vogt, through B.C.-based Multiactive Technologies. They have been careful to get input from teachers and the education ministry on design and content, he says.

Eight schools tested the project in the fall of 1996, and Brainium officially went online in February. By June, 1,000 were already accessing the Brainium.

When schools join the Brainium, teachers and students receive passwords that allow them to access it at home as well. A



BRAINIUM MASTERMIND
DAVID VOGT

province-wide licence through the Ministry of Education, Skills, and Training provides the service at no cost to schools for the next three years, says Vogt. After that, the service may no longer be free.

The public has limited access to the Brainium at <http://www.brainium.com>.



Brainium has eight main areas. Youngsters and teachers can browse through sections such as the "Daily Sponge" to get the most current information on science topics in a newsroom fashion. "Careers" introduces the youths to the array of future possibilities in science and technology, while the "Bugzone" uses interactive cartoons and adventure games to involve students in science.

There are plenty of sites for teachers to visit, too. "The Infomator" provides curriculum-guided coverage of science, Mondo Brainium is an entry point to view new happenings, while "Teachers' Prep Room" allows educators to communicate with colleagues and learn how to use the Brainium in the classroom.

Vogt says Brainium is directed at Grade 4 to Grade 8 teachers because teachers in that category have no specific science training.

"It's a lot harder to break into Grades 9 to 12 because teachers are science specialists and have more rigid science programs," he

continued on page 17

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News

Contest launched on Anik 1 anniversary

At 8:13 p.m. EST, on Nov. 9 1972 a Thor-Delta launch vehicle stood poised on Pad 17-B at the Eastern Test Range at Cape Kennedy, in Florida. Encased in a fairing near the top of the 119-foot rocket was a 1,238 lb. payload—Telesat Canada's Anik I satellite—destined to become the first domestic communications satellite in synchronous orbit. At 8:14 p.m., with a thunderous roar, and belching smoke and flame, the launch vehicle lifted slowly off its pad and accelerated into the clear night sky. Twenty-six minutes later Anik I was in orbit.

This description of the launch of Telesat's first satellite, from the company's 1972 annual report, reveals a corporate pride in one of Canada's most dramatic communications achievements.

"That launch was in a class by itself," says David Golden, who served as Telesat's president from its inception in 1969 until 1980. "If we didn't have a successful launch, we didn't have a company. The whole essence and core of our business was at stake."

In 1972, Telesat was a small company with a program without precedent: starting from scratch to plan, design, build and operate a

satellite communications system that would blanket the country.

In addition to overseeing the construction of the satellite, Telesat laid down a communications network across the country and built the sophisticated telemetry, tracking, and command (TTAC) system that would guide Anik to its orbital perch and keep it anchored during its expected seven-year lifespan (Anik A1 actually lasted 10 years).

Within the year following the launch, northern communities watched live *Hockey Night in Canada* broadcasts for the first time, and talked with the rest of the country over a new satellite voice network.

Blast your name into outer space!

To celebrate the anniversary, Telesat is looking for a name for its new direct broadcast satellite, to be launched next fall. The name Anik, which means little brother in Inuit, was the result of a similar contest in 1972. This time, in addition to placing the new name on the side of the satellite, Telesat is promising to include the name of the winner. For information on the Telesat National Satellite Contest call 800-520-0002 or check out the Telesat Web site at <http://www.telesat.ca>.

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Langley schools to be part of online education forum

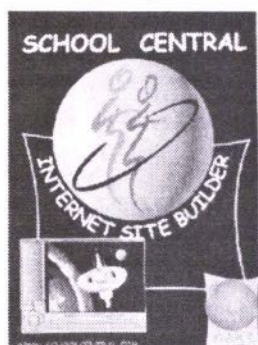
BY MAUREEN MACNEILL

Langley's school board is the first district to log on to a program that promises to be a tool for research, communication and organization for teachers, parents and students.

SchoolCentral, developed by Vancouver-based Family Ware International Inc., is using Langley School District 35 as a guinea pig to shape its program.

"We're providing them with a place to test their system and get practical experience with a school district," says Craig Spence, communications co-ordinator with the district.

About 10 of the 45 schools in the district



were interested enough to join the project, says Mac Petrie, manager of district operations.

In return, the link-up gives the district technical assistance in mounting Web sites and getting schools online, and the opportunity to explore the Internet and SchoolCentral as tools for education, says Spence.

"They will drive the product, how it works," says Family Ware chief executive officer Michael Brown. "We get their expertise so we don't go out cold with the product."

Brown says the product will be free, but the company is not offering it to anyone before January, when both sides are comfortable with its development.

"There's a huge need for this," says Brown, who is the father of five children. "I see the biggest problem with education as a lack of communication between parent, teacher and student."

The password-controlled site has the physical appearance of the school it represents.



The parents, teacher or student can then "walk" through the school and stop in certain areas to gather information. Some areas are off-limits. For example, students cannot walk into the teacher lounge.

Parents can browse through the school to find out what activities are coming up and read newsletters, and also have access to their children's desks to see what homework is in

the making, says Petrie. Parents and teachers can also communicate with the division.

"I think the part most interesting to us is

how this can open communication between the district, schools and parents," says Petrie.

However, he adds, the program also has an

educational angle. For example, it can allow students to work collaboratively on a project.

continued on page 18

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Wired Woman marks first year

BY JUNE CAMPBELL

Vancouver's Wired Woman Society is moving into its second year of operation with the announcement of new programs, new projects, and an award nomination. Emma Smith, president and founder, says organizers are catching their breath after an exciting year of growth and activity.

In one year, the Vancouver chapter has grown to 200 members, and the Kelowna branch, formed about six months ago and run by Hazel MacClement, has already attracted 25 members.

The Wired Woman Society is dedicated to teaching women about opportunities in new media industries and creating a space for women to learn and exchange information about digital technology. The highlights of its activities include the publication of the Wired Woman online magazine, a guest speaker program, in which prominent women in the multimedia industry share their experiences, and a new training program with Big Sisters of Greater Vancouver. All activities carried out by the society are done on a volunteer basis.

The fall edition of the online magazine, includes a show-and-tell contest for the "best dressed computer"; a feature interview with

Sandra Smith, a producer at Seattle's Zombie VR Entertainment who spoke at the anniversary celebration; a feature on Ignophobia; film and Web site reviews, a listing of must-see fall events and a eulogy for Diana Princess of Wales.

Payne remarked, "Penni Leong, our managing editor, has done an incredible job of assembling a great team of writers, editors and designers who work together to create this great magazine. Wired Woman was recently chosen for Yahoo Canada's Pick of the Week and the magazine crew are currently being considered for an award from WebWeek magazine in San Francisco."

The association's magazine content comes from volunteer contributors and editors. Queries and submissions are accepted from anywhere in the world and are then screened by the editorial team before being included in the magazine itself. A lot of the stories are written



WIRED WOMAN FOUNDER
EMMA SMITH

by members in Vancouver and Kelowna.

The monthly speaker program has featured Anja Haman of Radical Entertainment, and Darlene Callan of Mbanx. Future speakers include Sang Mah of Credo Multimedia, who will talk about her company and its Life Forms Human Figure Animation Software; and Mary Bryson, an education professor at UBC and the principal co-investigator in the GenTech Project, whose mandate is to cre-

ate conditions in which girls and women have maximum access to, and confidence in, a wide range of new information technologies.

The Big Sisters training project, co-ordinated by Mona Monteri, features a three-hour training session taught by volunteer instructors to teams of Big and Little sisters. Each team will have access to its own workstation, courtesy of a donation of top-of-the-line equipment from Wired Woman's first corpo-

rate sponsor, Ingram Micro. The first session was scheduled for October.

Payne said, "Things have grown and developed so quickly that my role is constantly changing. The same can be said for Mona Materi, my right hand woman, without whom I can honestly say that we would never have seen such success and growth. We're actively seeking volunteers to help to relieve some of this workload and are also looking for sponsors and funding that might help us to implement our programs and events more effectively. Our success has certainly led us to the conclusion that we need to increase our resources in order to support our members and programs."

The year has not been without at least one hitch, however. Wired Ventures (i.e. Hot Wired) has initiated proceedings claiming exclusive rights to the use of the "Wired" name, and are demanding that the use of the society stop using the name Wired Woman. If it is true that you know you're gaining in importance when you attract powerful antagonists, then Wired Woman might consider this to be a positive sign! Negotiations are underway. ♦

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Brainium

continued from page 12

says. "The [Grade] 4 to 8s are more general and most are gloriously appreciative of any help they can get."

"I would never have done any of these things if the Brainium wasn't available to me," says Waugh. "I would never have had time to read through and find these things. Here it's at my fingertips."

Waugh got involved in the pilot project

more than a year ago, when a flyer about the project came to his school. But even now he's the only teacher on staff using it.

That's one of the challenges to the Brainium inventors—to make all teachers comfortable using the technology, says Vogt.

"It will take time. Only a few hundred use it day to day, others get online once a week and some once a month," says Vogt. "We need to change their mindset."

To that end, the company is holding seminars to train teachers in its uses.

"It's hard to get some teachers involved in the Internet," says Waugh. "Most of them only use it for email."

Waugh is one of those teachers who logs on every day at home to browse through and see if any new projects are online. That's how his class won a box of frisbees in June, through a contest designed to keep users active.

So far, the Brainium is being used in about 1,100 of the 1,670 schools in B.C., says Vogt, adding that most should be turned on

to the program by Christmas. The company has another Christmas target: it is actively developing markets and hopes to be in four more provinces by the time Santa rides over rooftops.

Designers are also hoping in the future to have more collaboration with other types of media, such as textbooks and televisions, says Vogt.

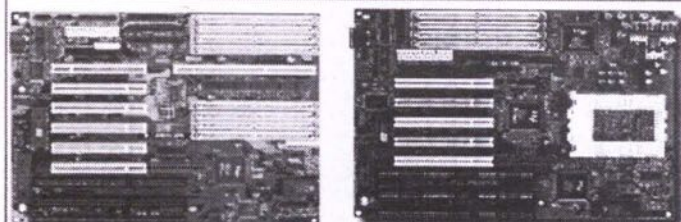
But to Waugh, it's simply another method to reach his students.

"I like to use it. I like to see the kids turned on to science," he says. ♦

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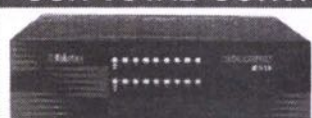
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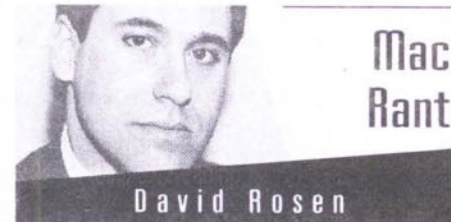
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Column

Media messages of Mac misfortune mistaken



Mac Rant

David Rosen

This month, dear reader, the Ranting One has devoted his column to answering some of his recent emails from the past few months.

Q: If this is a Mac column, why are you always down on Apple?

A: I hope you don't object to the general tone of the column, as that's what a "rant" is meant to be. While just about everyone recognizes that the Mac technology is generally the best around, however, it's the management of Apple that deserve to be the focus of my ranting. These folks have caused some big problems over the years and deserve to be skewered in the column.

Q: If this is a Mac column, why are you always down on Microsoft?

A: Microsoft is integrally enmeshed with the Macintosh and has been since well—before the first Mac rolled off the assembly line. As any devoted Mac fan can tell you, no other company has done so much to damage Apple's long-term well being as has Microsoft. That said, there are probably very few companies that have done so much to help the Mac as Microsoft has done either.

Q: Considering all the problems at Apple these days, should I wait to buy a Mac?

A: No, if you find the Mac you want at a good price, you should buy it without hesitation. Despite what you may hear in the popular press about the imminent demise of Apple, the company will be around for a long time. Besides, powerful forces in the industry are concerned about the company (and, more so, the Mac OS itself). Even if the company does go out of business or is purchased by another company, your Mac will work for years and you'll be able to find service for your investment for much longer than you will probably own it.

Q: All I hear is all the bad press at Apple. Is there anything good happening these days?

A: Plenty. Steve Jobs is back and he's making things

happen. From what I hear, most of the stories about jobs are true, so there may be reason for people at the company to fear him (for example, he does reportedly get into elevators and ruthlessly interrogate fellow passengers about what, exactly, they do at the company). Introducing some fear around Apple may succeed in getting everyone back on track. Also, the stock is up from its all-time low of around US\$12.50 achieved during the tenure of Gil Amelio.

Another good thing is the AppleMasters program (<http://www.applemasters.com/>). Under the direction of an expatriate Brit, Kanwal Sharma, Apple has signed up dozens of luminaries who are more than happy to give their endorsements to Apple. From actors to writers, from civil rights activists to the first African-American female astronaut, many of the world's leaders in their fields have gone on record as being Mac devotees. Among the masters are folks such as Canadian singer Bryan Adams, boxer and social activist Mohammed Ali, writer Tom Clancy, actor and director Richard Dreyfuss—and many, many others. Let's hope Apple can put some resources behind this program to make it even more effective.

Third, Rhapsody is coming. Two weeks ago more than 10,000 of Apple's developers were seeded with the early release of Rhapsody, Apple's next-generation operating system for server and high-end desktop applications. The Rhapsody Developer Release is intended to let software developers begin creating applications that will run on the new operating system. Wisely, Apple is repositioning the current Mac OS as the company's mainstream operating system, saying it will upgrade customers to Rhapsody over the long term.

Fourth, Apple is running a new "Think Different" ad campaign in the States, starting with two 60-second television commercials. The ads were first aired on ABC during the first network showing of Pixar's Toy Story and were produced by TBWA Chiat-Day, the advertising company that Apple recently rehired. Chiat-Day produced the "1984" commercial that launched the Macintosh back in 1984.

The new commercials feature a series of people, such as Albert Einstein and Mohammed Ali, who made a difference by thinking differently and working against the odds. ♦

Got your own questions? Send them to MacGuy@tpon.com. Please note that due to the volume of mail, individual questions cannot be answered.

Langley schools

continued from page 15

The company got involved with Langley's district almost by accident, says Brown. A Grade 5 teacher in the district, John Harris, showed a strong interest in classroom computer projects, and suggested the company expand an existing program, FamilyCentral into SchoolCentral, he says. The link up escalated to the entire district.

Petrie says the district has worked on developing business links in the hope that down the road those companies may apprentice some students.

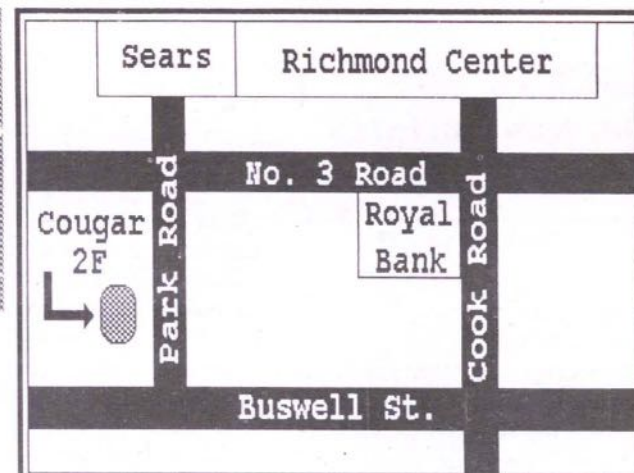
If students do not have access to home computers, they have preferred access to those at school, says Petrie. All of the regular communications systems in place before will still exist for parents who do not have home computers, he says.

The company is also on the edge of some groundbreaking technology that would allow more parents access to the system. Everyone is gearing up for Web television, says Brown. When it becomes available in Canada—it's already accessible in the United States—parents who can't afford a \$3,000 computer can get a \$300 cable modem added to their television that will allow them Internet access. ♦

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Pentium II - SERIES

P II-233	P II-266	P II-300
\$ 2080	\$ 2220	\$ 2550

ASUS P2L97 (440 LX) MainBoard
 32 MB 10ns SDRAM Exp.128 MB
 Fujitsu 2.5 GB (ULTRA DMA-33) IDE Hard Drive
 ATI 3D Xpression + 4 MB SDRAM Video Card
 Panasonic 24X CD-ROM Drive, 1.44 MB Floppy Disk
 SoundBlaster 16 PnP Sound Card
 15 In Non-Interlaced L-R SVGA Monitor .28mm dp
 ATX Tower Case With 230W Power Supply
 Logitech 2 Button Srial Mouse + Mouse Pad
 104 Key Win95 Keuboard, Amp. Stereo Speakers

Upgrade Option

64 MB SDRAM / SoundBlaster 64	180 / 60
HardDrive 3.5G / 4.3G / 5.25G	50/120/200
ATI AGP Expert@Work 4M / 8M	130 / 200
Acer 33.6 / 56 K Int Modem	80/120
Win 95/ CWin 95/ Twinbridge	120/170/260

☺ Mass Storage

Fujitsu Ultra 1.75G/2.62G/3.5G	195/235/295
Fujitsu Ultra 4.37G/5.25G	355/430
JTS 1.3G/2.0G/2.5G/3.0G	145/170/225/240
Quantum Ultra 2.1G/3.2G	245/295
Quantum Ultra 4.3G/6.4G	365/480
W.D. 2.1G/2.5G/3.1G	250/270/305
Maxtor Ultra 1.75G/2.5G/3.2G	200/240/285
Maxtor Ultra 4.3G/5.2G/7.0G	350/420/520
Seagate Ultra 2.1G/4.3G	230/335

☺ CD-ROM

Panasonic/Pioneer/Acer 24X CD-ROM	125
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☺ Sound Card

SB 16/AWE64 PnP	60/120
SB AWE 64 Value/Gold (Ret)	128/248
Acer FX-3D/AW35 Pro2	28/50

☺ Speaker

Amp. 60W Speaker	20
Yamaha MS 25 SubWoofers	130

☺ Modem

Acer Int Voice 33.6/56K	80/120
USR 33.6 Int/Ext	115/190
USR 33.6 Voice Int/Ext	135/225
USR 56 K Voice Int/Ext	185/285
33.6 PCMCIA Modem	150

☺ Mainboard (MMX Ready)

FIC PA2007-Apollo 1M	150
ASUS TXP4 (TX) 512K	180
ASUS TX97/TX97E (TX) 512K	208
ASUS P2L97 (LX) ATX	260
Acer AP5VM (VX) 512K	140
Acer AP5TX (TX) 512K	170
Acer AP57 MMX (SIS) 512K	100
Acer AX6L (LX)	310
Pentium M/B (TX) 512K	119
Pentium M/B (TXP) 512K	99
Pentium M/B (VXP) 512K	85

☺ Scanner

AcerScan 300F/310/610+	260/250/360
HP Scanjet 5S/5P/6100C	270/380/970

☺ Laser Printer

HP LaserJet 6L/6P/6MP	518/970/1200
HP LaserJet 5/5N/5M	1360/1788/2088
HP LaserJet 4V/4MV	2450/3550

☺ Ink Jet Printer

Canon BJC 250/4300/4500	200/285/560
Epson Stylus 400/600/800	270/360/500
Epson Stylus 1500	680
HP Deskjet 670/692C/722C	278/365/460
HP Deskjet 820C/870C/890	335/530/590

☺ Video Card

CL 5446 PCI (MPEG) 1M/2M	28/38	AGP ATI Expert@Work 4M/8M	245/310
S3 Virge 3D 2M/4M	50/65	AGP ATI Expert@Play 4M/8M	260/330
ATI 3D Xpn+ 2M/4M	8/118	AGP ASUS ATPU300 4M PC2TV	185
ATI 3D Xpn+ PC2TV 2M/4M	110/130	PCI ATI Expert@Work 4M/8M	215/280
ATI 3D ProTurbo/PC2V 4M/8M	175/235	PCI ATI Expert@Play 4M/8M	250/310
ATI ALL-IN wonder 2M/4M	300/330	Dimond Monster 4M	215
Matrox Myst 220 4M SRAM	165	Matrox Mii II 4M/8M WRAM	235/365

MultiStar Professional NoteBook (Upgradeable)

CPU	RAM	Display	HDD	CD-ROM	Price
P-133	16 MB	10.4 DSTN	1.3 GB	6X	\$ 1850
P-166	16 MB	12.1 TFT	1.3 GB	10X	\$ 2750
166mmx	24 MB	12.1 TFT	2.1 GB	10X	\$ 3150
200mmx	24 MB	12.1 TFT	2.1 GB	10X	\$ 3250

☺ Monitor

Proview 14/15/17	200/270/530	Acana 14/15/17	210/300/590
AcerView 15 56C/56E	345/365	ADI 15 E40/4P	370/390
AcerView 17 76C/78IE	640/665	ADI 17 5P/5P+/5G	680/710/850
NEC E500/E700	500/900	NEC A500/A700	440/770
Viewsonic 17 GT770/PT770	900/950		
Optique V773/V775	690/790		

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- Fax Order And Bid Are Accepted
- Leasing Available
- Price subject To Change Without Prior Notice
- All Products Name, Trademarks Are Properties of Their respective owner

continued from page 8

Maximizer debuts products for Windows CE platform

Maximizer Technologies of Vancouver has released a complete set of contact management products for the Windows CE platform, including planned support for Windows CE 2.0 for handheld PCs (HPCs).

Maximizer CELink keeps handheld computers running Windows CE in sync with desktop or laptop PCs. With a single button

CELink synchronizes Maximizer's Hotlist, Calendar, companies, contacts, and notes.

Now in beta testing, Pocket Maximizer is a full-powered contact manager that runs directly on HPCs running Windows CE. Pocket Maximizer shares many features with its desktop counterpart. It has an Explorer-style view made specifically for HPCs, which shows at a glance the connections between companies, people, and the tasks, appointments, and notes associated with them. Pocket Maximizer links to Pocket Word, sends email with one click, and synchronizes

with desktop PCs.

Maximizer Technologies is also planning a version of Pocket Maximizer for Windows CE 2.0.

CELink is priced at \$49. Pricing has not yet been set for Pocket Maximizer. CELink is available for purchase by download from <http://www.maximizer.com/celink.htm>, or by calling 800-804-MAXX.

Behind the scenes look at interactive entertainment

Electronic Playground the Web site has become Electronic Playground the TV show.

The half-hour program, which airs Saturdays on KVOS in Vancouver and Victoria, offers interviews, news and reviews on video, computer products and developers, Internet gaming industries, and pop culture. The show is produced by Vancouver's Greedy Productions. The EP Web site can be viewed at <http://www.elec-play.com>.

BC News Briefs are written and compiled by June Campbell and Computer Player! staff.



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Pentium System

Windows NT Certified

\$998
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Pentium® Chip 150
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16 MB EDO Memory
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1.44 MB Floppy Drive, Panasonic
2 GB EIDE Hard Drive
S3 SVGA PCI Video Card w/1MB & MPEG
104 Key Windows95 Keyboard, Mitsumi
Windows 95 w/CD & Manual

System Options

Intel Pentium 166/200 \$+45/+128
Intel Pentium MMX166/200/233 \$+73/+203/+328
AMD K5-75/166 \$898 Only/998
AMD K6-166/200/233 \$+37/+122/+383
IBM(Cyrix) 6x86 200+ \$958 only
IBM(Cyrix) M2 166/200/233 \$998/+49/+389

Upgrade Options:

Upgrade memory to 32/64 MB +\$58/168
Upgrade hard drive to 3/4/5/6 GB +\$39/149/239/269
Upgrade to 15"/17" Monitor +\$89/359
Add multimedia bundle 24x CDROM/SB16/Spks \$185
Add USB fax modem 33.6K/56K \$115/189
Add 3COM Etherlink ISA/PCI 10/Fast 100 \$85/109/98
FREE one month Internet Access
5 year warranty on labor, 2 years warranty on parts
Third year parts warranty add \$50 First year on-site warranty add \$75

** Lease based on 36 months & you own it. * Pentium is registered trademark of Intel Corporation.

Pentium II Workstation

\$2138
\$65/month**

Pentium II 233
Logitech Mouse
32 MB SDRAM Memory
Minitower Case w/230W PS
15" SVGA Color Monitor
1.44 MB Floppy Drive, Panasonic
3.2 GB EIDE Hard Drive, Quantum Ultra DMA
Matrox Mystique220 2MB SGRAM
104 Key Windows95 Keyboard, Mitsumi
24X CDROM DRIVE, Panasonic
Windows 95 w/CD & Manual

Intel Pentium Pro 200 Single/Dual CPU..\$1988/2718

Printer/Scanner

HP 400c/694c/870c/890cxi \$259/398/548/625
HP LJ 6L/6p/5/5N \$538/988/1398/1868
Brother 730DX+/760DX \$419/549
Canon BJ250/4300/4550 \$205/298/448
Epson 400/600/800 \$279/379/525
Okisata 4w/6E/6Ex(2mb) \$289/449/629
HP ScanJet 5p/6100c \$379/998
MicroTek E3/E6/E6 Pro \$225/425/765

System Upgrade

Memory

30pin 1/4 mb \$8/19
72 pin 4/8/16/32/64 MB \$22/33/58/116/329
SDRAM 16/32/64 MB \$68/128/318

Hard Drive & Zip/Jazz/Tape Drive

EIDE 2/3/4/5/6 GB \$219/259/379/459/489
SCSI 1/2/3/4 GB \$305/340/430/990
Jazz 1GB int/ext/disk \$419/549/125
External Tape Drive 2/3.2 GB \$239/349
LS-120MB Floppy Drive/disk \$189/29
Zip Drive Int/Ext/Disk \$135/175/15

Internet

33.6k/56k Fax Modem, Int. \$65/118
33.6k/56k Fax Modem, Ext. \$115/189
ISDN Modem Int/Ext. \$198/358

MultiMedia

CDROM Drive 12x/24x \$95/109
16Bit/SB 16/SB AWE64/Gold \$29/63/119/250
Bundle 24x CDROM/SB16/Spks \$185
CD-R (8R/4W)SCSI /IDE (6R/2W)/CD \$699/498/3.98

Motherboard w/CPU & Fan

Pentium 133/166/200 \$254/299/383
Pentium MMX 166/200/233 \$327/457/581
AMD k5-75/166 \$168/248
AMD K6-166/200/233 \$291/376/569
IBM (Cyrix) 6x86-166+/200+ \$208/215
IBM (Cyrix) M2-166/200/233 \$249/303/599
Pentium Pro 180/200 \$545/878
Pentium II 233/266/300 \$951/1127/1485

Monitor & Video Card

14"/15"/17" monitor \$199/269/569
S3 PCI Video Card 1/2/4MB \$35/45/62
Matrox mystique220 2/4mb \$139/159
Matrox Millennium II 4/8mb VRAM \$219/329
Diamond 3D 2/4mb VRAM \$159/219
ATI 3D Xpression 2/4mb \$79/109

Network Support

Novell Authorized
Windows NT Certified

Network

IntranetWare 4.11 5/10/25 \$858/1169/1888
Windows NT 4.0 server 5/10/ws \$888/1098/278
IBM Lotus Notes/OS/2 Warp Server V4.0 \$2658/799
MS BackOffice (NT/Exchange/SQL ...) \$3288
NE2000 ISA/PCI/3COM PCI, 10BT \$29/39/109
3COM PCI Fast Etherlink 1/20 \$99/85
Intel PCI 10/100 \$99
10 Hub 5/8/16/24 port \$78/98/219/365
100 Hub 8/12 port \$749/1089
10 & 100 Switch \$588
HP JetDirect / Intel Printer Server \$428/328
4mm DAT Tape 2/4 GB \$768/888
APC UPS 600/900/1250 VA \$338/478/628
IBM PC Server P200/32MB/8x CDROM \$2755
HT Server P133/64MB/2*2GB SCSI \$2999
Standby Server (fault tolerant for anyserver) \$3799
Internet Junction (Connect LAN to Internet) \$388 up
Cable 25'/50'/100'/500'/1000' \$15/25/35/120/220
Terminator/T-connector/Connector \$5/3/3

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Basic System (A)

AMDK5-133/166.....\$890/930
Intel P5-150.....\$900
IBM 6x86-166+/200+.....\$850/870

Intel Triton 430TX, MMX, 512k PBC
16M EDO 72pin 60ns(exp.to 256MB)
2.0G eide HD Mode 4
1.44Floppy Drive
PCI CL5446 1MB SVGA w/MPEG
14" SVGA 1024x768 .28 NI, LR, color
13" Tower case w/ 200W power
104 win95 keyboard & 3 button mouse w/pad
2 years Parts and Labor warranty

Optional:

(12x / 24x cd-rom eide.....+\$90/110
(16bit /32bit sound card.....+\$25/+50
(33.6K/56k Voice fax modem.....+\$65/120
(USR Spt 33.6 / 56K Voice+\$120/180
(EIDE: 2.5/3.0/3.8.....+\$30/80/140
(15" /17" SVGA /V95.....+\$80/320/920
(Windows'95 / MS-Home Essensial.....+\$120/130
(Laxmark 1000/Canon 250 printer.....+\$180/210
(80W/160W/300W.....+\$15/45/55
(16bit/32bit Ethernet comb card.....+\$28/32

Systems-B: MMX + SDRAM + UIDE

Intel P5MMX166/200.....\$1190/1290
Intel P5MMX 233mhz.....\$1420
AMD K6MMX166/200.....\$1190/1290
AMD K6MMX 233mhz.....\$1490
Cyrix 6xMX166/200.....\$1160/1250

Intel 430TX chipset based board, 512k PBC
SDRAM-DIMM 32MB 10ns 168pin
UltraIDE 3.2GB Quantum FB-ST HD
ATI 3D 2MB SVGA w/MPEG
1.44 Fujitsu floppy
15" SVGA .28 monitor color
15" Hilevel tower case w/ 230 power
Fujitsu 104 win95 KB and Logitech Mouse

Optional:

(12x / 24x cd-rom eide.....+\$90/110
(Creative SB16/64.....+\$60/110
(Creative 33.6K/56k Voice.....+\$78/150
(USR Spt 33.6 / 56K Voice+\$120/180
(Ultra-IDE: 4.3G/6.4G/7.0G.....+\$70/190/220
(Sony 100SX/200SX/200SF.....+\$220/620/690
(ViewSonic V655/15GS/V773.....+\$100/160/380
(Viewsonic V775/G771/P775.....+\$470/420/620
(Altec ACS45 /55 Speakers&Subwoofer.....+\$115/195

Pentium-II : AGP+SDRAM+UIDE

Intel PII 233/266mhz...\$1750/1900
Intel PII 300mhz.....\$2360

Intel 440LX based Intel/Asus Motherboard
Intel P-II CPU with 512k L2 cache and fan
32MB SDRAM Dimm 168pin 10ns
4.3G Ultra/33M UIDE HD (Maxtor/Quantum/WD)
1.44G FD Fujitsu
Mystique 220 3D 2MB with MPEG
17" ATX tower case w/ ATX power
104K Fujitsu keyboard
MicroSoft mouse / Logitech MouseMan

Dual PII 233mhz (two CPUs).....\$2480
Dual PII 266mhz (two CPUs).....\$2760
Dual PII 300mhz (two CPUs).....\$3720

Optional:

(Mystique220 3D 4M/Mille-II 4/8M...+\$35/110/200
(ATI Xpert@Play 4M /8M.....+\$120/230
(ATI xpert@play 4M/8M AGP.....+\$150/260
(#9 Resolution AGP 4M AGP.....+\$170
(Sound Blaster AWE64 /Gold/24x...+\$110/240/110
(ViewSonic G771/ P775/P/815.....+\$790/840/1930
(NEC E700 / P750.....+\$890/1050
(Sony200SX/200SF/17SE2T.....+\$890/970/990

Pentium Pro (P6)

Intel P6-180/200mhz....\$1170/1560
Intel P6-200(512K)..... \$2000

Intel Venus 440FX 2S,1PEIDE, ATX
32M EDO 72pin 60ns
FD 1.44G
3.2GB eide HD Mode 4
Mystique220 3D 2MB w/MPEG
17" ATX Tower case w/ATX power
Fujitsu 8725 104 win95 keyboard
Logitech mouse w/pad

Intel Dual PPro-180mhz x 2...\$1590

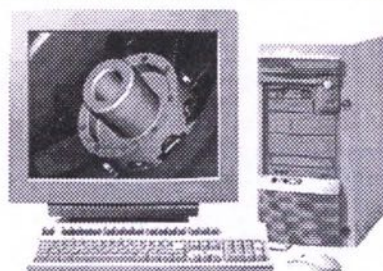
Intel Dual PPro-200mhz x 2...\$2380
(with Dual Pro motherboard and TWO CPUs)

NetBook™

Intel MMX Pentium CPU
12.1" TFT color screen
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2.1GB Toshiba HD
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33.6kVoiceFaxModem (removable)
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2 PCMCIA slots
InFra Port, serial ports
parallel ports, Ext. SVGA port
TV output port, PS/2 mouse port
Microphone/speakers built-in
win95 keyboard

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• BNC/Terminator/T.....\$3
• Coxal 10ft/20ft/50ft.....\$10/13/25
• Hub 9port /16port\$90/180
• Hub 100BT 12port.....\$560
• Hub OfficeConnect 3C16700 8P.....\$120

• Novell Users 5 / 10\$900/1200
• NT 4.0 Server 5 / 10\$880/1280
• NT Workstation 4.0 / license...\$240/60

• UPS 280/450/600.....\$145/200/340
• UPS Smart.600/1000/1400.\$399/550/680

Notebook

• Toshiba 440CDS P133MMX/16M/1.3G
12.1" DNST Color/10x.....\$2780
• Toshiba 460CDT P166MMX/32M/2.0G
12.1" TFT color / 10x\$4690
• IBM 380D P150MMX/16M/2.1G/8x
12.1" TFT / Win95.....\$3950
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10x / 56k modem /12.1" TFT\$3950

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• Altec ACS45/48/55 Spks.....\$120/200/220
• SB AWE64/Gold.....\$110/235
• Diamond 3D Monster 4M.....\$190
• Millennium 4M PCI/AGP.....\$210/290
• ATI @play 8M PCI/AGP.....\$280/335
• ViewSonic PT775 1600 .25.....\$938
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• USR SPRT33.6voicefaxMod.....\$120
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• Motorola 56k voice int.....\$145
• Creative 56k voice x2/K56.....\$120/165

• Intel CPU P5MMX166/200.....\$190/295
• Intel CPU PII-233/266.....\$635/785
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• Maxtor 3.2/4.3/5.0/7.0.....\$265/340/430/499
• Seagate 3.2/4.3/6.4.....\$285/350/485
• WD 3.2/4.3/6.4.....\$280/345/470

• FD 1.44 Fujitsu\$28
• Fujitsu 104 8725 /4725KB.....\$25/56
• MS V.21A / Intelli mouse.....\$32/58
• ATX case 17"/23".....\$95/115
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*All listed prices, quantities and specifaca-
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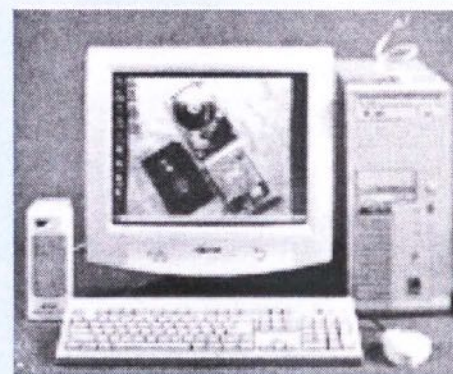
MMX Technology Computer
16 Megabyte EDO ram
2.5 Gig Hard Disk
512k Cache
PCI Slots, 72 pin memory slots,
15" Tower case, 3 1/2 floppy
2 Meg PCI Video Card
Delux 24X CD-ROM
16 bit Sound Card
Amplified Speakers
Windows 95 Keyboard
ISO 9002, CSA, GEM certified



\$999*

Intel Pentium 233MMx

MMX Technology Computer
64 Megabyte EDO ram
3.5 Gig Hard Disk
512k Cache
PCI Slots, 72 pin memory slots,
15" Tower case, 3 1/2 floppy
2 Meg PCI Video Card
Delux 24X CD-ROM
16 bit Sound Card
Amplified Speakers
Windows 95 Keyboard
ISO 9002, CSA, GEM certified



\$1399*

* Monitor not included, systems not exactly as illustrated, limited quantities, prices subject to change without notice

DEXTON COMPUTERS

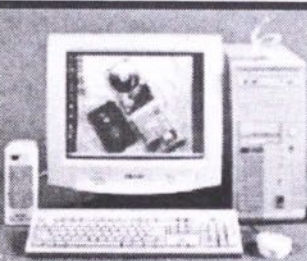
Power Bundles



P200 MHz + IBM Computer

Cyrix Processor, 2 Gig Hard Disk
16 Meg EDO RAM
512K Cache, Tower case
3 1/2 floppy drive, PCI Video Card
14" Non-interlaced monitor, .28dp
Hi-resolution mouse, Enhanced kbd.
33.6 Voice Fax Modem
Windows 95, Speakers
20X CD Drive, 16 Bit Sound Card

Cost **\$1199**
or Lease for **\$43/mo**



Pentium 200MMx

Intel Processor, 3.2 Gig Hard Disk
32 Meg EDO RAM
512K Cache, Tower case
3 1/2 floppy, 2 Meg PCI Video Card
17" Non-interlaced monitor, .28dp,
Hi-res. mouse, Enhanced Kbd.
33.6 Fax Modem
Windows 95, Speakers 80W
24X CD-ROM, 16 Bit Sound Card
Word Processor, Database, Spreadsheet,
Encyclopedia

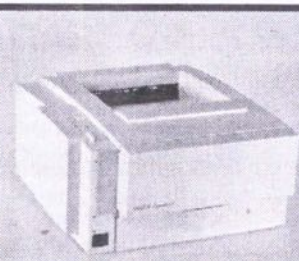
Cost **\$1999**
or Lease for **\$71/mo**



Delux 233MMx

Intel Processor, 4.3 Gig Hard Disk
32 Meg EDO RAM
512K Cache, Tower case
3 1/2 floppy, 4 Meg ATI PCI Video Card
17" Non-interlaced monitor, .28dp,
Hi-res. mouse, Enhanced Kbd.
56K Fax Modem
Windows 95, Speakers 80W
24X CD-ROM, Sound Blaster 16
Word Processor, Database,
Spreadsheet, Encyclopedia

Cost **\$2399**
or Lease for **\$86/mo**



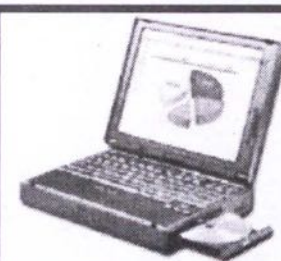
Canon
BJC 240 SE **\$219**

Canon
BJC 4300 **\$299**

Brother
730 DX Laser **\$469**

MS Office **\$249**

Corel Suit 8 **\$149**



IPC 166 Pentium MMx

Pentium 166 MMx Notebook
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Data backup wisdom hard earned



Software

Alan Zisman

This, dear readers, is a true story. And like something from the last century, it has a moral. But read on—it's good for you.

Near the end of July, the hard drive in my notebook computer suffered a meltdown—a drive crash.

Such things used to be common, ten years or more ago. In that era, hard drives were rated by capacity, speed, and MTBF—mean time before Failure. ("Mean" as in "average," though the other, more common definition of the word might be more appropriate).

There were no warning symptoms. The computer froze one night, but that's not so unusual that I thought anything of it until it wouldn't boot up the next morning. It tried to boot, but after a few seconds, the drive just clicked. No problem—I had an emergency boot floppy (do you?). I found it, booted, and tried to access the hard drive. I could get a directory—the list of files, and could even read a few of them. But with others, with most... the drive just clicked. The emergency ScanDisk program had the same result—rather than being able to repair the drive, it started to run, then came upon something on the drive it couldn't handle, and just clicked on and on.

About \$300 later, I had a replacement drive (not a bad price for a notebook part—portable parts always cost more than the desktop equivalents). And I'd been thinking of reinstalling all my programs anyway—a year or more of testing hardware and software, as I do, inevitably results in a system that gets sluggish, clogged with the debris left behind by poorly written uninstall routines. And what's more fun than spending a couple of summer days reinstalling software?

But while I had original floppies and CD-ROMs for all my programs (do you?), there was also the little matter of my data files... graphics, things I'd written, email I'd received, Web pages I'd saved for future reference.

Like most of us, I know about the importance of backing up my data. I'd been advising people about that for years. And I'd gone further... I'd even purchased a tape drive, and used it from time to time. Now when had I last backed up my data?

In this case, the backup was dated June 9, 1997... a mere six weeks or so earlier. The good news was that it included all my saved stuff from the past few years. The bad news was that it didn't include anything from the last six weeks... the things that I'd finished most recently, the things I was still in the middle of. Even my to-do list was six weeks out of date.

And inevitably, three separate editors emailed me confessing they'd lost articles I'd sent them... articles that now only existed on

the crashed hard drive.

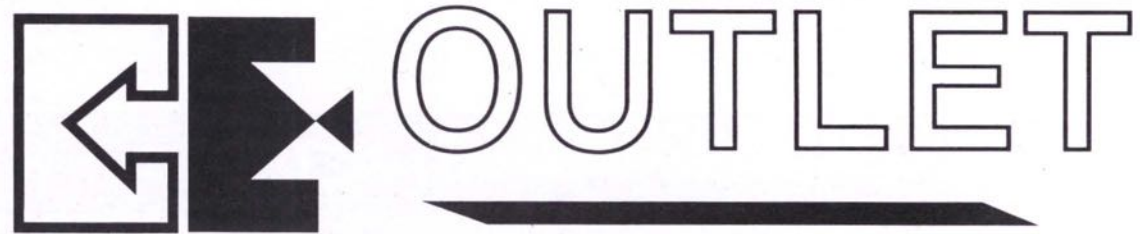
Slowly, I'm getting back to normal... I'm still reinstalling software, as I find I need a partic-

ular application. I've rewritten a couple of the missing articles, and simply replaced others. And I'm trying to become more disciplined

about making regular backups.

A drive crash like mine is one potential data
continued on page 24

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Software suite simplifies Chinese input

BY JUNE CAMPBELL

Polestar Marketing of Burnaby is one of the first companies in Canada to carry Apple

Computer's new Advanced Chinese Input Suite (ACIS).

ACIS is an integrated solution for inputting Chinese text on Mac OS-based computers.

Users can switch back and forth between microphone, tablet and keyboard to enter both simplified and traditional Chinese characters.

The package, which is priced at about \$276, includes the following elements:

- **Chinese Dictation Kit (CDK) 1.5**
This allows users to speak Cantonese or Mandarin into the Apple Dictation Microphone. The speech is automatically converted into Chinese characters with about 95 percent accuracy. It is sufficiently sophisticated to recognize dialects and accents, and permits multiple users.
- **Chinese Handwriting Kit**
This kit works with many third-party graphic tablets. Users enter simplified or traditional Chinese characters by writing on the tablet.
- **The Chinese Text-to-Speech**
This software "speaks" back Mandarin text in a synthesized voice, assisting the user with both pronunciation and spelling.

According to Polestar's Peiwen Quao, keyboarding has always been a problem for inputting Chinese words due to the thousands of characters. In the past professional typists have had to learn complex codes for each character. This system was suitable for professional typists, who only account for about five percent of Chinese language computer users. ♦

Site seeing:

PoleStar Marketing,
Web site: <http://www2.portal.ca/~qiao/asia/>
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Software

continued from page 23

disaster. Without wanting to become either gloomy or paranoid, there's also the possibility of a destructive computer virus. Or more prosaic ways to lose your data—theft (particularly common with notebooks), fire, or even car crash. A recent backup prevents none of these, but it does make it possible to retrieve the bulk of your lost data, which can easily be worth far more than the hardware loss and isn't covered by insurance.

And it needn't be hard to do, or expensive. Even before my disk crash, I had purchased an Iomega Ditto tape drive, for an affordable \$249—a parallel port model so I could use it with both my notebook and the desktop machine that mostly serves as my 13-year-old's game system. A \$30 tape holds 2 GB or so of data. While it takes a while to backup an entire modern, large hard drive, it can run unattended, overnight. An incremental backup—copying just files that have been changed or added since the last backup—only takes 15 minutes or so on my system.

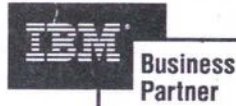
As I found out, an out-of-date backup is only a little better than no backup at all... my lack of a recent enough backup was entirely my own fault.

After my recent experience, I'm trying to do better. Really I am. ♦

Messages of support for Alan on his road to recovery can be sent by email to azis-man@rogerswave.ca.

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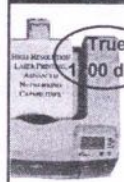


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Search and find utilities for desktops

BY JACQUES SURVEYER

All right, my desktop is a bit cluttered. Okay, okay—so my disk drive does reflect the conditions on my desktop. Listen, buster, I happen to know a lot of junkyards that have amazing systems of classification. Now, when do you want me to find that review I did on desktop software, this week or next?

If you are a bit like me and are organizationally challenged, especially on your PC disk drive; you may be interested in couple of hardcore, military-strength search-and-find utilities for your desktop. Let me say at the outset that the following two products are right at the transition between old and new Windows.

A friend who has seen my desktop and lived to tell the tale has, for three or four years, been quietly urging me to look at a utility from Eclipse (by way of Phoenix Software) called Eclipse Find. Eclipse Find does what Zyindex and Basis and whole bunch of high-end text-search software do—it indexes all the files on your disk drive(s) and then allows you to search for files containing one or more text strings.

Look into the Eclipse

In contrast to Zyindex and their ilk, however, Eclipse Find is a bargain at \$49 (plus three other utilities, including Dashboard and Folder Bolt). Now, Corel and Microsoft Office have similar file-search tools, but they are restricted by a number of factors:

- limited number of file types indexed;
- very slow indexing or updating of indexes;
- and very large index sizes—as high as 20 to 35 percent of the size of the files indexed.

Eclipse Find is much more versatile, having no restrictions on file types indexed. In fact, you can supply file extensions to exclude files such as EXE, DLL, and GIF—Eclipse Find already has a list of the most common exclusions. It also allows you to choose which directories and subdirectories to index and do incremental additions to the same.

In short, Eclipse Find is easy to setup, the indexing is fast, (8 MB of files were indexed in four minutes on a Pentium 120 MHz with 24 MB of memory), and the indexes are small (1.18 MB for 8 MB of files—less than 20 percent of the original file sizes).

And given that Eclipse Find is easy to operate, having a two window pane approach, showing all the files along a narrow strip and

the highlighted file's contents in the main window pane.

What more could I want? A version compatible with Windows 95.

Although it worked in Windows 95, was showing its age. It didn't appear on the taskbar when the program was running and it couldn't display the latest file formats such as Word, Excel, and Powerpoint.

Whirligig

One day while doing some Web surfing, I noted AltaVista Search Personal edition was available as a free download. I decided to give it a whirl. AltaVista is very fast—it indexed 1.6 GB of files in ten minutes (160 MB per minute vs. 2 MB per minute for Eclipse Find) and the size of the index files were 8 MB (less than 0.1 percent of the files scanned vs. 18 percent for Eclipse Find).

AltaVista has its peculiarities, however. It must be run from a Web browser that supports Java applets. Popular browsers such as Netscape Navigator 2.0 or above and Microsoft Internet Explorer 3.0 and above can be used to host AltaVista Personal.

AltaVista Personal works just like the Internet version: nearly the same screen layout, controls, and output (but none of the new

categorization and tree/clustering views offered with the Internet's AltaVista). This means a quick learning curve for Internet users, but it also means a clumsy help file, with tips hidden away on some godforsaken shady HyperText lane. Thank heavens a double click on a search file brings up Inso's Quick Viewer, so most popular file formats, including the latest from Microsoft, can be viewed quickly on screen.

In addition, one might quibble about the response time of six to ten seconds per query (versus the two to three seconds for Eclipse Find), but given that the index covers every file on my machine and is seven times smaller than Eclipse Find's, the search performance is not bad.

The documentation is all electronic except for a tiny crib sheet designed to fit in the CD-ROM jacket the software comes in. A 20 page getting-started guide would make the \$79 Canadian price a little easier to bear. But I shouldn't complain. Now I regularly go surfing to find all the riches squirreled away on my own machine. ♦

Jacques Surveyer is a Web photographer; seek and you will find him at jbsurv@inforamp.net ready to answer your searching questions.

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Complain, complain, complain

BY CARYN MLADEN

I know it's not fashionable to be happy about anything these days, so I'm going to complain about how much complaining I hear.

Specifically, can everyone collectively stop harping about the Internet, please? From "AOHell" to "World Wide Wait," everyone has their own slur for something in the online universe. No, it's not perfect, but it's still pretty amazing considering the short time it's been around and the low cost of usage. Simply put, it's high time to recognize that the Internet is a cool technology.

"Oh, I had to wait a whole minute for the 'yourlibraryhere.com' site to load and then it told me it would take 12 minutes to download a file!" Tough! Just think about how long it would have taken you to get that file if you couldn't use the Internet.

When I needed some patent forms and information recently, I found the site and downloaded the files in a few minutes. Without the Internet, it would have required a flight to Washington, D.C., a drive around those confusing streets, a search through the library stacks, lots of waiting in line for information and copying, then the flight back. Or I could have spent lots of time and money on the phone playing voice-mail tag, explaining to a hundred or so different people what I want, eventually maybe convincing them send me the file for a hefty shipping and handling charge, and then waiting several days for delivery.

Lost losers

Speaking of delivery, some Net newbies complain about their email getting lost. First of all, this is extremely rare unless a person mistypes an email address. I figure, if you can't read over what you've typed, you don't deserve having your mail delivered. If you don't think the correct address matters in the "real world," try sending your mortgage cheque to the wrong street address a few times.

Second, I have as much difficulty with Canada Post and FedEx as I do with the Internet. If a message is important and I don't get a timely response, I track it. I call to make sure it arrived online, by mail, by courier, or by fax. Besides, usually if there is a problem with an email, the mail server tells me about it within a few minutes. I've never gotten that kind of service from any other message delivery service.



Next complaint: You can't always get online. My answer? Get over it! The Internet is a developing technology and the available bandwidth supply can't yet keep up with the demand. Thousands of "rack and stack" modems are being added every hour to keep up with the world's Internet usage. Local POPs (points of presence) are being added every day by Internet service providers (ISPs). Anyway, if you care so much connecting all the time, you can always pay the price for a dedicated T1 line.

Speaking of cost, I can't believe people complain that the Internet is too expensive. For between \$20 and \$30 per month, you can get all the Internet access you want. This is about the same price as telephone, cable TV, or cellular phone service, but you get the advantage of being able to send and receive communications anywhere in the world without long-distance charges.

Lucky Canucks

A recent report on Internet costs found that Canada was ranked one of the least expensive countries, while it had one of the highest ratios of POPs per user. In many European countries, including France and Germany, the average cost was over \$100 per month.

So, let's get these Net naysayers off our backs and online. Better yet, if you don't like it, no one's forcing you to go online at all. Leave cyberspace to people like me, who appreciate a good thing when we use it. ♦

Reason to complain, complain, complain

BY DAVID ROSEN

If you've been anywhere on the planet this past year, you're doubtless convinced that the entire world is permanently wired to the Web, video-conferencing online in real time, and connected at a million-or-so Kbps. When you log on, however, you can't find anything online except junk mail telling you how to GET RICH NOW. After your browser freezes and your computer crashes, taking with it hours' worth of work, you realize it was all a dream—and not the good kind, either.

Suggesting Internet technology is robust enough for business is a lot like comparing a sophisticated telephone switching network to two cans tied together with a piece of string. Internet email is unreliable and half the Web sites either don't exist or shouldn't. Lots of time you can't even log on because your wacko neighbour is downloading more porn or a new schematic diagram for a nuclear bomb using "everyday household items." Right, as if your wacko neighbour has any of those.

Anyway, the information available on the Web isn't that great. There's no easy way of figuring out the facts from the factoids; the opinions from the ramblings, or separating the wheat from the chaff, as it were.

Ad nauseam

If you've been online for more than a few weeks, you've probably realized what passes for content is mostly advertising. In most cases, you

have to go to extreme lengths to find anything of value. It's like going to a public library and finding all the books tossed into a big pile on the floor without their covers. Somewhere in this mountain of uncategorized material is the information you want. The question is "where?"

Now in the "olden" days of books, publishing companies would hire writers renowned for their expertise. Editors would be employed who understood the subject matter and could correct or vet anything questionable. Now, anybody who can get to a computer terminal can claim expertise online. No fuss, no muss—and no diploma, either.

The technology cheerleaders will tell you the Internet is the least expensive way of reaching out and learning about our world. Unfortunately, most people use the Internet to send those tiresome "thought-you'd-find-this-funny" emails to their friends, family, and co-workers. You know what I'm taking about: "Top 10 Ways to Know You've Had a Nuclear Bomb Go Off in Your Face—Very Funny!" and other time wasters.

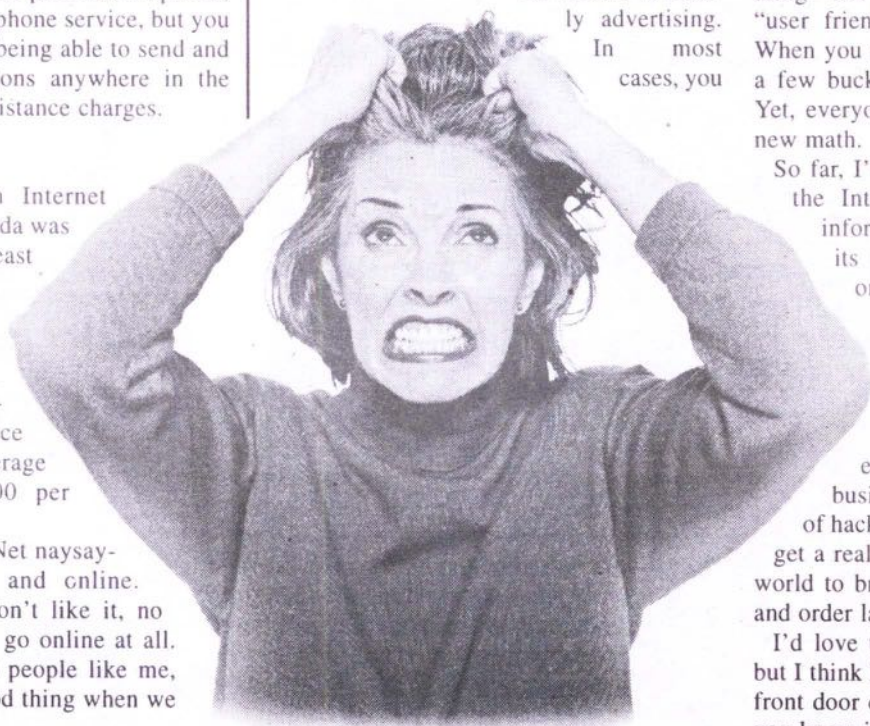
New math

In reality, however, it's expensive to get on the Net. You have to buy the computer system; get a fast modem; purchase the browser software and maybe an email package if your ISP doesn't bundle them in with your Internet access; and learn how to use everything—not an easy task considering how "user friendly" everything is these days. When you add up all this, it probably costs a few bucks for every message you send. Yet, everyone says it's cheap. Must be the new math.

So far, I've talked about the high cost of the Internet, the doubtfulness of its information, and the unreliability of its message delivery. I guess the only thing left to complain about is Net privacy.

In short, there is none. Just about anybody can read your mail—from your boss, who has a legal right to read every email you send (if you use your business account), to the thousands of hackers who seem to have no time to get a real job but have all the time in the world to break into your Internet accounts and order late-night pizzas.

I'd love to wax philosophic some more, but I think I see my wacko neighbour at my front door carrying a big silver box. I'll let you know if I think it's funny. ♦



Sprint starts online service

BY SAUL CHERNOS

Telecommunications company and long-distance provider Sprint Canada Inc. says its new Internet service is targeting Canadians who are not yet online and want ease of use.

After a year of development and two beta tests, Sprint Canada launched The Most Online at a news conference this fall in a decidedly low-tech venue: the historic one-room Enoch Turner Schoolhouse in downtown Toronto.

With the contrasting backdrop of a wood stove, wooden benches, and the Union Jack flag, Sprint executives outlined the new service. Operating at speeds ranging from 14.4 to 56Kbps, The Most Online offers local dial-up access in 17 cities, including Toronto, Montreal, Winnipeg, Edmonton, Calgary, and Vancouver, with more communities to be added.

Users get customized home pages, news and weather updates, a comprehensive help section, and free 24-hour technical support.

The Most Online currently only serves Windows 95 users. David Hagan, executive vice-president of marketing sales and service with Sprint Canada, says service for Mac users is currently "under development and should be available in about six months."

Hagan says Sprint Canada estimates Windows 95 users represent about 60 percent of the current Internet access market, a figure he expects will increase as new users come aboard.

"We wanted to go after a market—the majority of which is addressed by Windows 95," Hagan says. "About one million households are on the Internet in Canada, and we think this will climb to two million. We want to help customers who aren't technically inclined get onto the Internet. We'll also attract existing Internet users because we're stressing ease of use."

Phone tag

Sprint Canada promises The Most Online will be as simple to use as the telephone. The company says instructional materials are written in plain language, and single integrated invoicing is available for customers who also use Sprint's long-distance telephone service.

The service is available in English and French, although help desk service is available in other languages, including Cantonese and Mandarin.

"The Internet is still largely an English vehicle," Hagan says. "We'll develop additional languages as we see the opportunity to do so. ...We're not addressing the total market right now."

Hagan says The Most Online is a wholly Canadian service unrelated to Sprint Internet Passport, the service Sprint Communications Co. launched in the United States in August 1996. Sprint Canada is owned by Call-Net Enterprises Inc., a Canadian Telecommunications holding company, and is only affiliated with its U.S. namesake through a strategic alliance.

"We started at ground zero, talking to Canadians to come up with the strategy,"

Hagan says. "It was a completely separate development project."

Roughly three weeks into the operation, The

Most Online is meeting expectations, Hagan says. He would not reveal subscriber numbers or financial results, saying these will only be

made public in year-end reports. ♦

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\$797/\$819/\$849/\$888

Pentium Systems

Intel Pentium 150/166/200 MHz CPU
256K Pipe-line Burst Cache
8MB RAM (exp. 128MB)
2.0GB EIDE Hard Drive
1.44MB Floppy Drive
PCI Video Card w/1M RAM (exp. to 2M)
14" NL, LR, SVGA, 1024x768, 28 Monitor
Mini-tower Case w/200W PS
104 Win'95 Enhanced Keyboard
Logitek 3B Mouseman
One month free internet access

\$909/\$969/\$1079

Pentium mmx Systems

Intel Pentium MMX166/200/233 MHz CPU
256K Pipe-line Burst Cache
16MB E.D.O. RAM (exp. 128MB)
2.0GB EIDE Hard Drive
1.44MB Floppy Drive
ATI 3D Exp. Video Card w/ 2M DRAM
15" NL, LR, SVGA Proview Monitor
Mini-tower Case w/230W PS
104 Win'95 Enhanced Keyboard
Logitek 3B Mouseman
One month free internet access

\$1119/\$1259/\$1469

Pentium Pro / PII Systems

Intel Pentium Pro180/ 200/ / PII 233/266/300 MHz CPU
256K (PII 512k) Pipe-line Burst Cache
32MB E.D.O. RAM
2.5GB EIDE Hard Drive/ (PII: 3.2GB)
1.44MB Floppy Drive
ATI 3D+ Video Card /4M / (PII:ProTurbo/4MB)
24X CDROM / 60W Amplified Speakers
Sound Blaster 16 (PII: Sound Blaster 64AWE)
15" NL, LR, SVGA Proview Monitor
Mid-Tower Case w/230W PS
104 Win'95 Enhanced Keyboard
Logitek 3B Mouseman
One month free internet access

\$1679/2109 // 2549/2749/3199

Dual Pentium Pro / PII (with One CPU)

Intel Pentium Pro 200 / PII 266 MHz CPU
256K (PII 512k) Pipe-line Burst Cache
32MB E.D.O. RAM
3.2GB EIDE Hard Drive / 1.44MB Floppy Drive
ATL3D+ ProTurbo 4MB
24X CDROM / 60W Amplified Speakers
Sound Blaster 64AWE / 56K Int.V Fax DataMODEM
15" NL, LR, SVGA Proview Monitor
Mid-Tower Case w/230W PS
104 Win'95 Enhanced Keyboard
Logitek 3B Mouseman
One month free internet access

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16MB to 32MB+\$62

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Multimedia Stereo Speakers / 48 CD titles with encyclopedia

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Memory

30 Pin 1M/4M.....\$6/20
72 pin 4M\$20
72 pin 8M\$39
72 pin 16M\$62
72 pin 32M\$125
72 pin 4M EDO\$19
72 pin 8M EDO\$33
72 pin 16M EDO\$59
72 pin 32M EDO.....\$122
168p 16M/32M SDRAM.....\$95/149

Motherboard with CPU

P150/166/200 MHz.....\$229/289/399
MMX 166/200/233.....\$299/409/599
Pentium Pro 180/200.....\$469/879
PII 233/266/300 MHz.....\$999/1189/1639
686 P150+/166+/200+...\$169/179/189
AMD K5 75/100.....\$139/169
AMD K6 166/200/233...\$279/369/599
686 M2 166/200 MMX.....\$239/299

Hard Drives

1.6GB EIDE Hard Drive\$209
2.0GB EIDE Hard Drive\$229
2.5GB EIDE Hard Drive.....\$249
3.1 /4GB EIDE Hard Drive...\$279/319
5/6/7GB EIDE HD.....\$459/\$499/\$539
2.1GB SCSI-2 Hard Drive\$349
3.1GB SCSI-2 Hard Drive\$439
4.2/6.0GB SCSI-2 Hard Drive.\$489/669

Printers / Scanner

Canon BJ-80/250C/4200SE.....\$379/\$209/299
Canon BJ-4300/4550.....\$289/559
HP DeskJet 692C/820C/870C.\$369 /339/ 529
HP LaserJet 6L/5N.....\$529/1969
HP LaserJet 5/5M/5Si.....\$1389/2099/3249
HP LaserJet 4V/4M+\$2459/\$2610
HP 4MV/1600C.....\$3549/\$1799
HP 6P/6MP.....\$979/\$1199
Brother HL-720, 600dpi, 6ppm.....\$369
Brother HL-730, 600dpi, 6ppm.....\$439
Brother HL-760, 1200dpi, 6ppm\$539
Epson Stylus 400/600/800.....\$279/\$389/\$509
Lexmark 2030/2050/2070.....\$280/\$335/\$399
HP ScanJet 5S/5P/4C.....\$269/\$389/\$939
UMax s6c lite/full.....\$395/\$795
MicroTek E3/E6.....\$275/\$469

Hard Drive Controllers

IOMega PCI SISC Controller.....\$129
Adaptec 1505/1522 SCSI Ctrl\$75/\$90
Adaptec 2940U SCSI Ctrl\$259
Adaptec 2940UW SCSI Ctrl.....\$319
Adaptec 3940 SCSI Ctrl.....\$509

Tape / Zip / Jaz Drives

Zip Drive, 100MB, Int/Ext.....\$149/\$189
Iomega Jaz Drive, 1G, Int/Ext.....\$399/\$525
Zip 100MB/Jaz 1GB Disk.....\$17/\$119
Colorado T3000 Int/Ext.....\$239/\$309
Colorado T4000 Int/Ext.....\$469/\$569
Iomega Ditto 2.0GB Int/Ext\$199/\$249

Monitors

Proview 14"/15"/17"\$209/\$289/\$549
Daytek 14"/15"/17"\$235/\$299/\$569
Acer 14"/15"/17"\$239/\$369/\$619
MAG 15" T/DJ530\$449/\$429
MAG 17" DJ700/700T.....\$789/\$859
ADI 4V 15"/5V 17"\$439/709
ViewSonic 15"GS/17"G771.....\$449/\$739
NEC 15" C500/M500.....\$479/\$519
NEC 17XV+/P750.....\$909/\$1069
NEC 17" M700.....\$1029
SONY 100Sx/100 Sf.....\$509/\$589
SONY 200Sx/200 Sf/SE2T.....\$889/\$1029/\$1039

Video Cards

Cirrus Logic VLB/PCI, 1M\$59/\$28
S3 Trio 64, 1M/2M D\$39/\$55
S3 Virge 3D, 2M/4M.....\$55/\$65
ATI Mach 64, 1M/2M D\$63/\$75
ATI 3D Xpression, 2M EDO RAM.....\$75
ATI 3D+, 2M/4M SDRAM.....\$89/\$119
ATI 3D+, PC/TV, 2M/4M SDRAM.....\$109/\$139
ATI 3D+, ProTurbo, PC/TV, 4M/8M.....\$149/\$239
ATI Mach 64, 2M/4M V\$209/\$299
ATI TV Tuner Card/All-in-one 4M.....\$119/\$299
Diamond Std 64, 1M/2M D\$85/\$99
Diamond Std 64, 2M/4M V\$179/\$249
Diamond 3D 2M EDO RAM.....\$89
Diamond Monster 3D 4M EDO.....\$229
Matrox Millenia II 4M/8M.....\$279/\$395
Matrox Mystique II 4M.....\$169
Millenia TV Tuner/Video Capture.....\$139/\$199

Multimedia/CD Writer

16 Bit PnP Sound Card\$23
Sound Blaster 16 PnP/32PnP.....\$59/\$105
Sound Blaster 32/64 AWE.....\$109/\$119
Panasonic/Acer CD-ROM ..24x.....\$129
Toshiba CD-ROM ..24x.....\$139
Sony CD-ROM ..24x.....\$139
Pioneer 12x SCSI CD-ROM.....\$129
NEC 6x4 CD Changer.....\$129
HP Surestore 7100i CD-Writer.....\$549
Sony 926S CD-Writer/+software...\$429/499
Sony 928E IDE CD-Writer/+software.\$469/\$519
Blank recordable CD.....\$5

Modems

33.6/56 Kbps Int. Fax/Data\$55/119
33.6/56 Kbps Int. Voice/Fax/Data...\$69/129
Supra 33.6 Int. Voice/Fax/Data\$85
USR 33.6/56K Int. Fax/Data.....\$115/\$199
USR 33.6/56K Int. Voice.....\$129/\$209
33.6 Ext Voice/Fax/Data.....\$115
PCMCIA 28.8/ 33.6K Fax/Data...\$189/229

Cases/Keyboards/Mouses

104 Windows 95 keyboard\$18
Fujitsu 8725/4725\$30/\$55
Logitech MouseMan Serial\$33
Logitech MouseMan Bus\$89
13"/15" Tower Case w/230W\$39/\$45
19"/25" Tower Case w/230W\$59/\$95

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Tel: 278-6805 Fax: 278-6653

Picking an Internet service provider

The new dating game

BY PAUL ANGYAL

If you were asked to name life's most important decisions, you'd probably mention (not necessarily in this order) marriage, buying a house, and changing your brand of toilet paper.

Now, you'd better add another: choosing your Internet service provider, or ISP. The name says it all. These companies open the gate for you to get on the Internet, by giving you the primary dial-up connection through your modem to their server, which, in turn, is hooked up to the Net by high-speed digital trunks, such as T1s and T3s.

ISPs were practically unheard of a few short years ago, but since then they proliferated, multiplied, and died off at a rate glow-worms could envy. They are in a cut-throat business with razor-thin profit margins. Their survival depends on the number of subscribers they can attract, so their ads are a Siren's song.

Getting hitched to an ISP carries the best and the worst of a dating game. You not only want to find that special someone, but also strive for stability. Internet services often turn out to be different in practice than they looked on the first encounter. It is wise to shop carefully and ask all the pertinent questions.

Most ISPs offer similar access packages, giving you a certain number of usage hours per month. These are often named after shades of metal (bronze, silver, and so on). The average minimum cost comes in around \$20, and for that you get email, a news reader, and the ability to surf the World Wide Web.

As you have a quota, and surcharges can be steep if you go over, you want to make sure that you can use your time reasonably. The first consideration should be: how much traffic can their server handle? What is their line-to-user ratio?

All companies economize—ISPs or otherwise—beginning with the telephone company. They are working with tens of thousands of lines and hundreds of thousands of people, so their line ratio is of lesser consequence, except when everyone wants to call Mom at the same time. For an ISP, too many subscribers for too few modems can be devastating, because it means busy signals up front, and not just during peak hours. So ask for their ratio and compare. The lower the number, the better.

The shape of service

ISPs are similar to fitness clubs. They'd love to have you for a longer term (and take your money up front), thus the fabulous dis-

counts offered on yearly plans. It can be a good deal, assuming that the ISP will be there for the whole year. In this business, unfortunately, there are no guarantees. Larger, well-financed, and stable providers can be a good bet, but you'd better stick to monthly "plans" with the smaller ones or start-ups. Don't sign up for the long term until you're satisfied that your preferred ISP has a guaranteed shelf life.

Typical service plans only give you the chance to visit (or surf) Web sites, but if you want to have your own up in cyberspace, look for an ISP that offers Web hosting as well. Many do, but for an extra charge that can fluctuate wildly. Many offer some space on their Web server, around 5 MB worth included in the basic package—which is quite adequate for a small, personal, mostly text-oriented set of pages. But start spiffing it up with graphics or sound and you'll fill 5 MB quicker than you can say JPEG.

It is a good idea to tally the size of your Web site and look for the ISP that offers the right amount of space for your requirements for the least cost. They typically bump you up to a "business" category if you need more than 5 MB and that can cost you more on the plan, but you save on the cost of the excess server space.

Master of your domain

The other option—if you have an income-producing Web site or vie for cyber-recognition—is to take out your own domain name. It comes with some initial costs (US\$100), but gives you a virtual trademark on the name. The added benefit is that you become independent from your ISP, and if you have to move for any reason, your domain address will not change. Not all ISPs host virtual domains. This is another question you need to ask before hand.

Next, once you have established your basic criteria, ask about the so-called hard-transfer limits (HTL), as well. This is basically the amount of content, measured in MB, the ISP will allow your visitors to glean from your Web site. The hard transfer limit is not something they like to advertise, because usually it's a very small number. My ISP includes the first 100 MB per month in month monthly fee. My own Web site is rather popular, contains about eight pages with some graphics, so I'm fairly close to my 5 MB allotment. In practical terms, it means that I can have 20 full "hits" per month—people who read each and every page and its contents. That is chicken feed; hits are normally measured in thou-

sands, even millions. Once you go over the limit, overdraft penalties begin to pile up, unless you activate a lockout message, which tells the whole world that you are a cheapskate.

Alternative? You have to move up to a different plan, three or four times more expensive than the basic, but with a vastly larger HTL.

Calling for backup

An equally important issue is the availability of service and support staff. Everybody is bound to experience log-in or connection problems once in a while, and it is very important to know if there is someone to help you out—and at which hours. Often, breakdowns occur in the evening or weekends, and you are not helped much by having to leave a "detailed message" in a general mailbox on the premise that "your call will be returned as soon as possible."

A good indication of a strong support commitment is a separate calling number for that group—not just an option branching off the main computer-generated menu tree.

To summarize: be prepared. Ask the questions, shop around, and don't lock in long-term. Get to know each other first.

It is a dating game, after all. ♦



B.C. INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDERS

Name	Address	City	Sales tel.	Web Site	Email	Year estab.	User to line ratio	Top modem speed	56K technology	Do you offer			Tech support		
										Dial-up	Dial-up	Asst.	# of staff	Response time	
ACC Tel			800-370-0015	www.acctel.com	sales@ican.net	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Unlimited: \$19.95/mo
ACT360 Media Ltd.	230-6651 Fraserwood Pl	Richmond	278-3612	www.actlab.com	junoliu@act360.com	1994	6:1	28	NA	No	No	No	3	NA	Personal Dial-up: \$19.95/mo
Advantis Canada (IBM Global Network)			800-426-2255	www.can.ibm.com/globalnetwork/	ibm_direct@ca.N/A	NA		56	X2	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Canada Comprehensive
AE Electronics	138-2981 Simpson Rd	Vancouver	604-279-5510	www.aebc.com	tium@aebc.com	NA	5:1	56	X2	Yes	Yes	No	6	Immed.	PlanA: Start fee/kit
Allnet Exchange Direct	202-2525 Manitoba St	Vancouver	604-708-5541	www.axd.com	sales@axd.com	1995	NA	56	NA	NA	NA	No	NA	NA	Allnet Exchange Dir
Alter.net Internet	303-21183 88th Ave.	Langley	604-888-6514	www.bc-alter.net	info@bc-alter.net	1996	14:1	33	NA	No	No	No	4	5 min	Simply mail: No start fee
AOL Canada		Toronto	888-AOL-HELP	www.aol.ca											Plan A: \$13.95/mo
Axon Internet	600-1380 Burrard St.	Vancouver	604-687-8130	www.axionet.com	info@axionet.com	1994	10:1	56	Rockwell	Yes	Yes	No	13	NP	Individual dialup: \$19.95/mo
BC Business	PO Box 2412	Sydney	250-652-4867	commercial.net/vault	bcbc@commercial.net	1995	10:1	NP	NA	NA	NA	No	2	NA	Plan: No start fee, \$19.95/mo
BC Tel Adv. Comm.	5-3777 Kingsway	Burnaby	604-432-1SDN	www.bctel.net	data_services@bctel.com	NA	NA	NA	NA	Yes	Yes	No	NA	NA	ISDN@Home: \$60.00/mo
Blue Crow Internet	1560-555 W. Hastings	Vancouver	604-608-1127	www.bluecrow.com	info@bluecrow.com	1995	9:1	56	X2	No	No	No	5	10 min.	Flat Rate (56K): No start fee
Canada Internet Direct	1050-555 W Hastings St	Vancouver	604-602-1700	www.direct.ca	cservice@direct.ca	1994	15:1	56	X2/Rock	No	Yes	Yes	15	10-15 min.	Standard: \$25 start fee
Connet Intelligence Tech.	2132-12811 Rowan Pl.	Richmond	604-279-0380	www.conneti.com	contact@conneti.com	1996	10:1	33	NA	No	No	No	3	Immed.	Novice: No start fee, \$19.95/mo
Cyberus	NA	Vancouver	NA	www.dogday.cyberus.com	dogday@cyberus.ca	NA	NA	28	NA	No	No	No	NA	NA	Unlimited: \$24.95/mo
Digital Ark	306-576 England Ave.	Courtenay	250-334-2365	www.ark.com	info@ark.com	1996	20:1	33	NA	No	No	No	8	1 hour	Gold: \$39.95 start fee
Digital Rain Internet	#310-7231-120th Street	Delta	604-596-4473	www.digital-rain.com	account@digital-rain.com	1993	7:1	33	NA	Yes	NP	No	8	NP	Basic email: Kit incl
Dowco.com	200-1024 Ridgeway Ave.	Coquitlam	604-937-7610	www.dowco.com	webmaster@dowco.com	1995	15:1	128	X2	Yes	Yes	No	10	0-4 hours	Interlite: \$19.95 start fee
Fronet	105-1755 W. Broadway	Vancouver	604-739-8061	www.fronet.com	info@fronet.com	NP	10:1	28	NA	Yes	No	No	2	NP	Plan 1: No start fee, \$19.95/mo
Hookup Comm. Corp.	515 6th St.	New Westminister	604-257-2499	www.van.hookup.net	sales@hookup.net	1993	15:1	33	NA	Yes	NP	NA	80	NP	Residential: No start fee, \$19.95/mo
Imaginnet Communication	200-425 Carrroll St.	Vancouver	604-662-3624	www.imag.net	info@imag.net	1996	15:1	33	NA	Yes	No	No	4	15 min	Basic.net: No start fee, \$19.95/mo
In2net Network Inc.	501-938 Howe St.	Vancouver	604-601-2113	www.in2net.com	info@in2net.com	1996	8:1	33	NA	Yes	No	No	4	Immed.	Personal Plan A: \$25 start fee
Infomatch	143-9632 Cameron St.	Burnaby	604-421-3230	www.infomatch.com	accounts@infomatch.com	1992	14:1	56	X2	No	No	No	3	4 hours	60 Hour: No start fee, \$19.95/mo
Infoserve Tech. Ltd	5438 Imperial St.	Burnaby	604-482-8248	www.infoserve.net	info@infoserve.net	1993	10:1	33	NA	No	No	No	2	NP	Int 45: No start fee, \$19.95/mo
Internet Gateway	800-889 W. Pender St.	Vancouver	604-669-8489	www.intergate.bc.ca	staff@intergate.bc.ca	1995	10:1	56	X2/Rock	Yes	No	No	10	2 min.	Personal Plan: No start fee, \$19.95/mo
Internet Junction	1-4216 25th Ave	Vernon	250-542-4130	www.junction.net	info@junction.net	1994	15:1	56	NA	Yes	Yes	No	5	NP	Introductory plan: \$19.95 start fee
Internet Lightspeed	210-6833 Sellers Ave.	Burnaby	604-482-1191	www.lightspeed.bc.ca	info@lightspeed.bc.ca	1992	10:1	33	X2	Yes	Yes	No	4	NP	Conservative users: Silver: \$19.95 start fee
Internet Portal Services	201-2525 Manitoba St.	Vancouver	604-257-9401	www.portal.ca	info@portal.ca	1994	3:1	33	NA	Yes	Yes	No	NP	2 hours	Unlimited access (p
Intouch InterNet	3448 Cambie St.	Vancouver	604-875-6307	www.intouch.bc.ca	info@intouch.bc.ca	1995	12:1	33	NA	No	No	No	3	Immed.	Entry: \$9.95/mo for
iSTAR Internet			888-GO-ISTAR	www.istar.ca	support@istar.ca	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Dial Up Plan A: \$25 start fee
Lynx Internet	508-938 Howe St.	Vancouver	604-331-2522	www.lynx.bc.ca	info@lynx.bc.ca	1995	8:1	56	X2	No	No	No	5	5 min.	Plan A: \$25 start fee
Maximum Internet	101-5007 47A Ave.	Delta	604-940-8952	www.max-net.com	admin@max-net.com	1995	8:1	28	NA	No	No	No	4	30 min.	Personal: No start fee, \$19.95/mo
MDI Internet Ltd.	700-1080 Howe St. Vancouver	Vancouver	604-602-9168	www.mdi.ca	info@mdi.ca	1989	6:1	128	NA	Yes	Yes	No	3	Same day	One year (paid in ad
Mortimer Online	120-2465 Beta Ave.	Burnaby	604-294-8341	www.mortimer.com	info@mortimer.com	1995	12:1	28	NA	No	No	No	3	10 min.	Unlimited: No start fee, \$19.95/mo
MOST online		Toronto	888-812-EASY	www.sprintcanada.ca											50 hour block: \$39.95
Netcore Pro. Services	103-8080 Anderson Rd	Richmond	604-271-2624	www.npsnet.com	info@npsnet.com	1992	10:1	33	NA	No	NA	No	5	NA	Silver: \$24.95 start fee
Planeteer	210-11180 Voyageur Way	Burnaby	604-606-7615	www.planeteer.com	info@planeteer.com	1994	8:1	28	NA	Yes	No	No	3	15 min.	Personal dialup: \$25 start fee
Prism Internet	120-8740 Beckwith Rd.	Richmond	604-270-6873	www.prismnet.bc.ca	info@prismnet.bc.ca	NP	8:1	28	Rockwell	Yes	Yes	Yes	4	5 minutes	Personal 150: \$25 start fee
Radiant Communications	1420 W. Georgia St.	Vancouver	604-608-0999	www.radiant.net	info@radiant.net	1996	7:1	56	Rockwell	Yes	Yes	Yes	4	5 minutes	Basic: \$25 start fee, \$19.95/mo
Rapidnet Technologies	3-31018 Peardonville Rd.	Abbotsford	604-855-7456	www.rapidnet.net	info@rapidnet.net	1995	NA	NA	NA	No	No	No	NP	NP	Premium: No start fee, \$19.95/mo
Skybus Internet	L8-601 W Broadway	Vancouver	604-482-1239	www.skybus.com	sales@skybus.com	1995	15:1	28	NA	No	No	No	6	Immed.	Plan 1: No start fee, \$19.95/mo
SmartNet	114-3855 Henning Dr.	Burnaby	604-473-9080	smart.com	sales@smart.com	1994	11:1	56	X2	Yes	Yes	Yes	8	10 min.	Unlimited: No start fee, \$19.95/mo
Sprynet		Columbus, Ohio	800-244-4257	www.sprynet.com				33							Occasional: Start fee
Sympatico			800-773-2121	www.sympatico.ca	assistance@sympatico.ca	NA	NA	56	NA						Mercuri (email only
Ultratnet Canada	250-780 Beatty St.	Vancouver	604-685-2120	www.ultranet.ca	info@ultranet.ca	1996	12:1	56	NA	No	No	No	3	15 min	Plan A: \$25 start fee
Uniserve Online	27009 Fraser Hwy	Aldergrove	604-856-6281	www.uniserve.com	info@uniserve.com	1988	12:1	128	Rockwell	Yes	Yes	No	15	NP	Dialup: No start fee
Wizard Tower	14503-104th Avenue	Surrey	NA	tower.ca.gateone.com	sales@tower.ca	1997	4:1	33	NA	Yes	Yes	No	NA	immed.	

Note: Due to space considerations we cannot provide information on all the plans and services offered by these providers. For more details, please check out the searchable database at <http://www.tcp.ca>. The ISPs included on this list are those that responded to our survey by our publishing deadline. Changes and additions can still be made to our online database. If you are a service provider and would like to be added to the list, or would like information about your service to be updated,



System-Pro Computers Ltd.

Tel : 583-9977 Fax : 583-9979

HomePage : www.system-pro.bc.ca email : syspro@system-pro.bc.ca

MONTHLY SPECIAL



Aptiva S Series
Aptiva E Series
Aptiva L Series

Christmas Special

Cyrix MediaGX 133 System \$ 1,100

- Global Pentium Class MotherBoard (Same as the M.B.in Compaq Presario 2100 System)
- Cyrix MediaGX 64 Bit Processor
- Internal 16K Byte Write-Back L1 Cache
- 16M EDO 72 Pin SDRAM Memory (Exp. To 128 MB)
- Western Digital 1.6G EIDE Hard Drive
- Amjet 33.6K Internal Voice Fax Modem
- 16x CD-ROM
- Built-In SVGA Video Card
- Built-In 16 Bit Sound Card w/ Speakers
- 15" Tower Case w/ Power Supply
- Logitech 3-Buttons Mouse w/ Pad
- Fujitsu Win95 Keyboard
- Proview 14" SVGA Monitor

P-166MMX/P-200MMX/P-233MMX/AMD K6-166MMX/AMD K6-200MMX/AMD K6-233MMX/CyrixM200+

- Giga-Byte PCI-ISA Board
- Intel Pentium CPU
- 16MB Ram w/ 256K Cache
- 3.5" Floppy Drive
- W.D./ Quantum 1.6G Hard Drive
- S3 Trio64 PCI Video Card
- 15" Tower Case w/ Power Supply
- Panasonic 24X CD-Rom
- Sound Blaster 16 PnP Sound Card w/ Speaker
- US Robotics 33.6K Internal Fax/Modem
- Fujitsu Keyboard, Logitech Mouse w/ Pad
- Proview 14" SVGA Monitor

1544/1699/1916/1538/1670/1814/1536

Acer

AcerNote Light Multimedia
Model: 383

Pentium 150MMX Notebook

- 150MHz Intel, 24MB EDO Memory, 256K Cache
- 2.0GB Hard Drive, 10X CD-ROM, 16-bit sound card
- 11.3" dual-scan, 33.6K Modem, 1.44 Floppy Drive

Acer
Model: 2761

Pentium 200MMX System

- 200MHz Pentium, MMX, 32MB EDO Memory
- 256KB cache, 4.1GB H.D., 16X CD-ROM, 2MB Card
- 16-bit sound card, 33.6Kbps fax/modem
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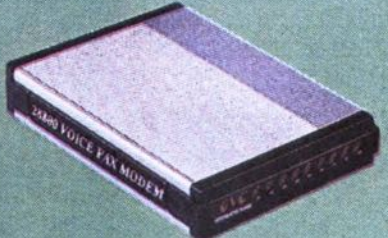
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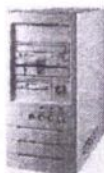
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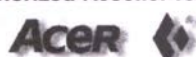
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BY ALAN THWAITS

In the first of our Beginning Linux articles (CP! October issue), we talked about what Linux is: a freely distributed OS that offers workstation power and real-world stability to the PC-based user. In this article, we'll take a look at where to find Linux.

Before you can install Linux on your system, you'll need to decide which of the distributions of Linux you want to use.

As we indicated in last month's article, Linux is available for free on the Internet. There is, however, no single, standard release of the Linux—it's an ongoing "work in progress." That means that, in order to put together a Linux OS that suits your needs, you'll spend a good amount of time finding and downloading the required Linux kernel and related software.

In the beginning years of Linux (1992-1993), most people got Linux by doing long

downloads off the Internet or a BBS, followed by an elaborate procedure that transferred the downloads onto multiple floppy disks. One of these disks would then be booted and used to install the other dozen. With luck (and no media failures), you'd finish your installation many hours later with a working version of Linux. Or maybe not.

All at once

Happily, now there are other options. You can, if you wish, download any one of several distributions from the Net (<http://sunsite.unc.edu/pub/Linux/distributions/INDEX.html>). But it's far easier (on your nerves and, in the end, your wallet) to buy one of the high-quality commercial Linux distributions distributed on CD-ROM. These are usually available for less than \$50 at your local bookstore or computer shop, and will save you many hours of aggravation.

What is a Linux "distribution?" Basically, it's a package that contains the Linux kernel (the "core" of Linux), application and utility programs, and an installation utility. While all distributions are based on the same or similar kernels and many of the same utilities, each distribution has something different to offer the consumer.

The trick, obviously, is to find the Linux distribution that will suit you best. How to do this? The best way is to get into the spirit of Linux, by exploring, experimenting, and testing.

If you have access to Usenet, read the basic Linux-related newsgroups for a while, then

ask for personal opinions from people who have installed Linux. If you know someone who's already installed Linux, ask him or her for help and advice. Ask around—among your computer buddies, there's probably a Linux devotee or two. Or go to a meeting of a Linux user group (one such group in Vancouver is the VPCUS Linux SIG). Don't be shy—Linux fans are well known for sharing their wisdom and experience!

Alternatively, you could visit the Web sites of some of the major Linux distributors and have a look at what each has to offer. You can then order direct, or pay a visit to your friendly local computer bookstore for a look at their Linux shelves.

Who's who

Here's a brief overview of the most popular distributions:

Caldera: A commercial package, therefore more expensive than the rest. This also means that its installation utility is a gem—fast, user-friendly, and intuitive. If you're willing to pay some bucks in order to get maximum guidance (particularly helpful if you're not a hardware freak), this may be the distribution for you.

Debian: Along with Red Hat, the distribution that offers the easiest install of the "non-commercial" distributions. Comes with tons of good apps, and presents very few problems for the first-time Linux installer.

Slackware: A standard in the world of Linux. Authored by Linux guru Patrick Volkerding, this distribution offers an up-to-date, stable kernel, as well as lots of software from Internet Linux archives. May suit the user who knows his or her hardware and has had some experience doing OS installs.

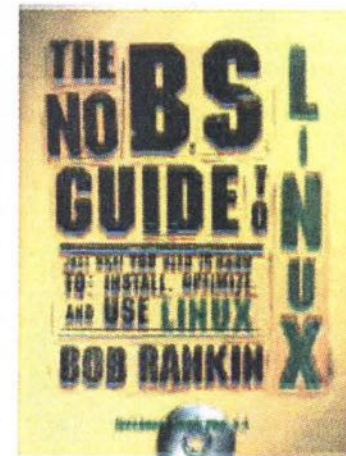
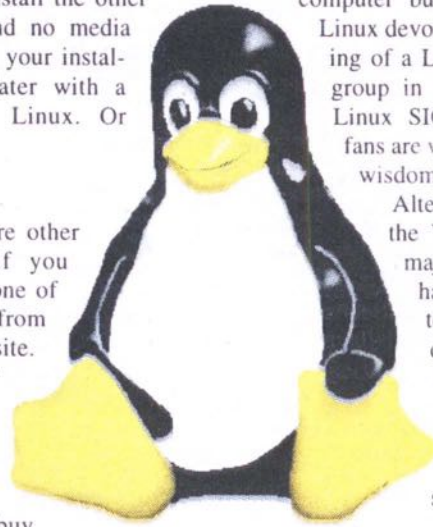
Red Hat: A legend in the world of Linux (and deservedly so) for its ease of installation, inclusion of the latest kernel, and offering of excellent programs and applications for business and personal use.

Linux Pro: Developed by Workgroup Solutions Inc., this is an enhanced version of Red Hat Linux. It includes lots of documentation, as well as the Apache Web server, dozens of games, compilers, and utilities.

Yggdrasil: This company, named after the Norse Tree of Life, claims to be the oldest Linux software company. It's "Plug and Play" Linux is exactly that—with the help of a CD-ROM and two supplied floppies, you'll soon be on your way to running Linux on your PC. As an added

help, this distribution comes packaged in a 176-page book with step-by-step installation instructions. ♦

Next month, we'll talk about what you can do with Linux once you've installed it on your system. Stay tuned!



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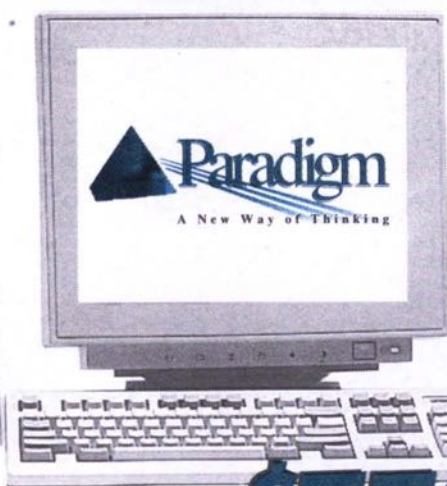
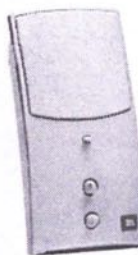
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Mac Web page programs begin covering Windows

info

box

PageMill 2.0, from Adobe Systems Inc.
Windows 95/NT. US\$99.
Visual Page, from Symantec
Corporation. Windows 95/NT US\$99.

BY ALAN ZISMAN

There are urban myths, stories that get repeated over and over, gaining power with each repetition, although no one can actually attest to their truthfulness—the baby alligators flushed down New York City toilets and thriving in the sewers, for example. Computer folklore has its own share of urban myths, such as Bill Gates purportedly saying “640 KB of memory ought to be enough for anybody.”

More recently, the belief that “75 percent (or some other high number) of all Web pages have been designed on Macs” has arisen. Maybe it's true. It has certainly appeared enough times in the media (I would like somebody to show me the research on which the claim is based, however).

Whether the claim is true or not, it's certainly been the case that, just as in the field of graphics and design, the coolest Web design tools have tended to appear on the Mac platform first. But with the shrinkage of the Mac market, and fears for Apple's very survival, software-development companies seem to be feverishly working to make sure that their formerly Mac-only products are now available to the PC/Windows market as well.

I've been spending time with two Web page design products, both ported over from the Mac environment, and both

released in new Windows versions at about the same time: Adobe PageMill and Symantec Visual Page.

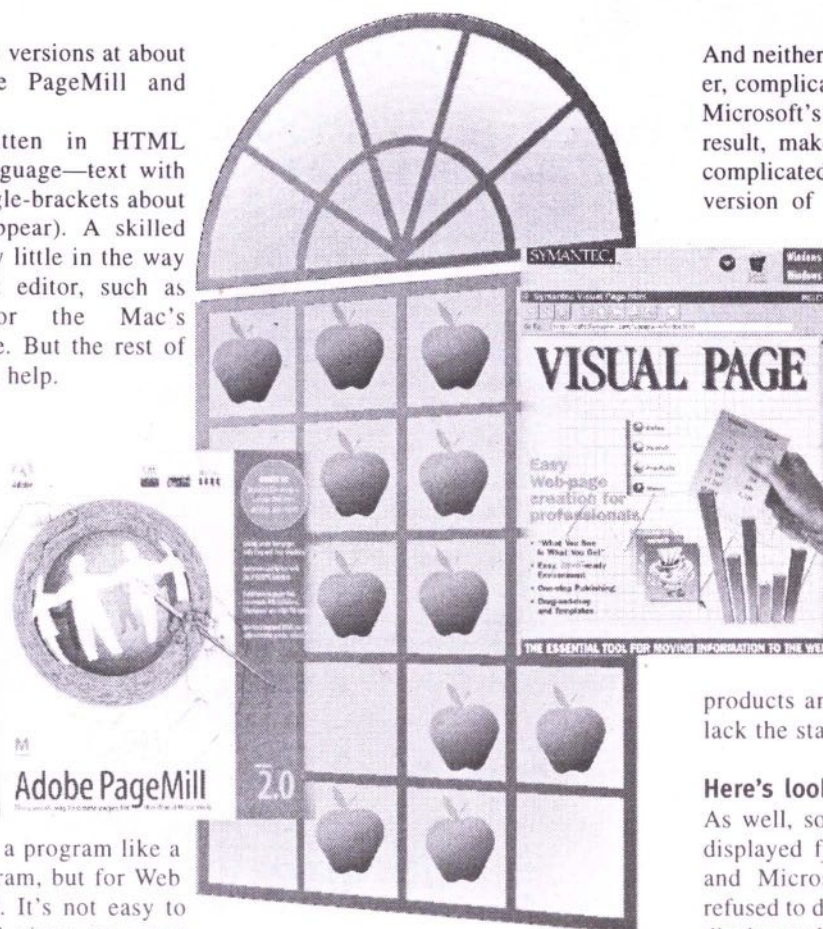
Web pages are written in HTML (HyperText Markup Language—text with notations enclosed in angle-brackets about how the text should appear). A skilled HTML author needs very little in the way of tools. A simple text editor, such as Windows Notepad or the Mac's SimpleText could suffice. But the rest of us are happier with some help.

Helping hands

As a result, the Web explosion has seen a parallel explosion in tools aiming to simplify the creation of Web pages. Some are glorified text editors, with toolbar icons or menu commands for common HTML formatting commands.

For many users, the Holy Grail of Web page design has been the seemingly unobtainable: a program like a desktop publishing program, but for Web pages. HTML is limited. It's not easy to specify exact fonts and sizes, or exact placement of graphics, for example—not when you want your page to be able to display on all sorts of computers. Even viewing the same page on the same computer in two different browsers can lead to surprises.

In many ways, PageMill and Visual Page have a lot in common. Both were first released on the Mac, and are now available in Windows versions as well. Both attempt to give the Web page designer a desktop publishing-like experience. Both try to support the HTML 3.2 standard features and add-ins, such as Java applets and frames. Both even sell for the same price.



And neither includes tools to manage a larger, complicated Web site—tools included in Microsoft's Front Page, but which, as a result, make that product larger and more complicated to get accustomed to (the Mac version of Adobe PageMill works with a companion product, SiteMill, for Web site management, but SiteMill is not yet available on the Windows side).

If forced to pick only one of these products, I would lean towards Symantec's Visual Page by a slim margin. Its interface is more like all those familiar Windows products, with most features available from a toolbar icon, and more standard right-click support. PageMill's interface seems more quirky (although both products annoy me with dialog boxes that lack the standard OK and Cancel buttons).

Here's looking at you?

As well, some pages that I'd made, which displayed fine in both Netscape Navigator and Microsoft Internet Explorer, simply refused to display in PageMill, while I could display and edit them in VisualPage.

Six of one...

In fact, in some ways, choosing between them is more a question of taste and style than of objective specifications or power. Either lets you switch between an almost accurate, editable page view; an editable view of the HTML source code; a non-editable, more accurate page view; or viewing your page in the Web browser of your choice (PageMill lets you view in more than one browser; VisualPage makes you choose).

Either make it easy to create an attractive Web page, quickly and easily, but both require some fine tuning with the actual HTML code. For example, neither provides an easy way to create borderless frames.

While you're at it, check out www.claris.com for HomePage, a similar Mac/Windows product, soon to be released in version 3.0.

Professionals tend to scorn anything that makes Web page design easier, but the rest of us will find that either of these products makes it easy to create attractive and feature-laden Web pages. ♦

<http://www.foxinteractive.com>

Don't have a cow, man, but Bart Simpson's room, complete with a half-eaten moldy sandwich, is now online, along with the rest of the Fox Network cartoon family's house. Well, not really their cartoon house, but a real, life-sized replica built in none other than Springfield, Nev., namesake of the Simpson's home town.

Christopher Kingry, Fox Interactive

<http://www.globalseve.net/~anjalimusic>

With the approach of the next millennium, the interest in New Age music is on the rise. This graphically appealing Web site showcases the smooth jazz/New Age instrumental music of Rousseau and Carlton, who are gaining worldwide recognition. It features audio samples,



music links and reviews.

R.J. Roberts

<http://www.intranet.ca/~awhp/awhp.html>

I recommend my “Another World Home Page,” the most detailed and informative soap opera site on the Web. And it's from Ottawa!

Eddie Drueding

<http://www.cs.cmu.edu/Unofficial/Canadiana/CA-sites.html>

Check out this real cool site, for and about Canada.

Grant S. Wintle

<http://www.cabb.com>

Canadian Baby Boomers Inc., a year-old national group dedicated to representing Baby Boomers, has just gone online. It will

provide fun and useful information for its visitors on a daily basis.

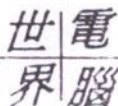
Sheila Jones, CABB co-ordinator

<http://www.eMOAT.com>

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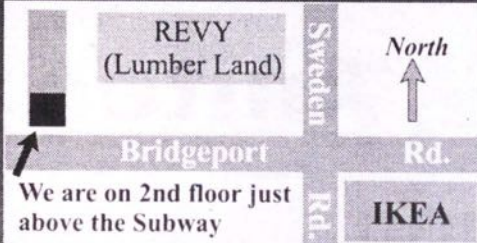
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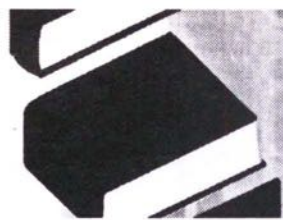
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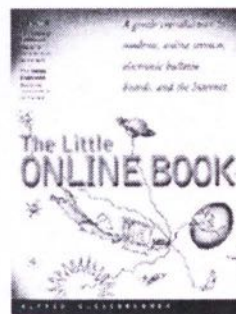
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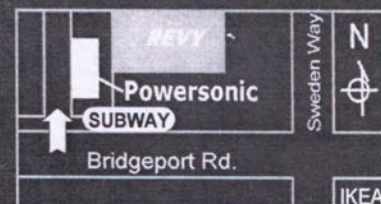
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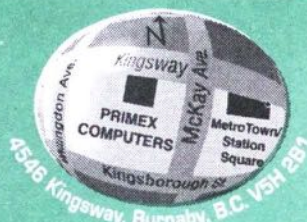
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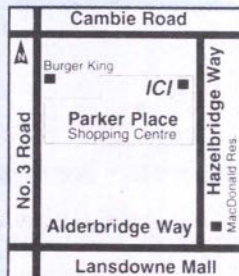
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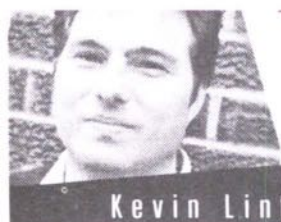
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Tips and tricks, part one: CONFIG.SYS



OS/2
Ready

Kevin Linfield

On an OS/2 Warp machine, there are many things you can do to optimize your system. This month, I'll take a look at the CONFIG.SYS file and offer suggestions on beneficial changes the average user can make.

Before you edit anything, make sure you keep a backup copy of the original, and always have a bootable OS/2 disk handy (from BootOS2 or your installation diskettes). When you edit your CONFIG.SYS file, be sure to use an editor that will not wrap long lines (use TEDIT or E.EXE. Do not use EPM!). For more information about these statements, read the online glossary or help files that came with OS/2.

Tip 1

If you do not have any High Performance File System (HPFS) partitions on your hard drive,

REM out the line IFS=C:\OS2\HPFS. If you do have HPFS drives, play with the CACHE parameter. The maximum amount is 2048KB (2 MB), and I recommend a minimum of 512KB. The more RAM you have, the larger this number should be.

Tip 2

If you spend most of your time downloading files from the Internet or have lots of background disk I/O, change your disk priority. Change the line to be PRIORITY_DISK_IO=YES.

Tip 3

Your FAT partition cache is set with the line DISKCACHE=512 (or whatever value you set). If you only have FAT partitions, set this to be about 2048 (if you have at least 16 MB of RAM). Unlike HPFS cache, this parameter can be up to 14 MB! For a mixed HPFS/FAT system, try 1024 for both HPFS and FAT cache. Again, experiment! (the "D" value you may see in your CONFIG.SYS is for a default of 10 percent of RAM. I do not recommend this value).

Tip 4

The MAXWAIT parameter can be lowered to 2 for Pentium (or above) CPUs. For those

with 386 or 486 chips, keep this at the default of 3.

Tip 5

Increase the initial size of your swapper file to the value it becomes during normal use. Check its size in your \os2\system directory (file is SWAPPER.DAT) when you are online, with your word processor open, and your CD music playing. Then change the value in your CONFIG.SYS to reflect this. I have SWAPPATH=C:\OS2\SYSTEM 2048 12288 for a default swapper size of 12 MB on my notebook.

Tip 6

If you do a lot of printing and your sound card is not on IRQ 7, add the /IRQ switch to the line BASEDEV=PRINT01.SYS to change from polled printing to IRQ printing.

Tip 7

If you have a SCSI or ISA machine (i.e., not an MCA machine), REM out the line

BASEDEV=IBM2.FLPY.ADD.

Tip 8

If you only want programs that are in your startup folder to run when you boot your machine (and not programs that were also running when you exited OS/2), add the line SET RESTARTOBJECTS=STARTUPFOLDERONLY to the end of your CONFIG.SYS.

Tip 9

If you are using TCP/IP for OS/2 or the Internet Access Kit and you don't run any DOS or Win-OS/2 Internet programs, REM out the lines DEVICE=C:\TCP\BIN\VDOS-TCP.VDD and DEVICE=C:\TCP\BIN\VDOSTCP.SYS.

Tip 10

If you want the default action for "Abort, Retry, or Fail" to be "fail", add the line AUTO-

continued on page 44



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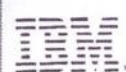
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OS/2 Ready.

continued from page 42

FAIL=YES to the end of your CONFIG.SYS.

Tip 11

If you want error messages to be logged to your hard disk instead of appearing on your screen when an application crashes, add the line SUPPRESSPOPS=C (or whatever drive letter OS/2 boots from).

Tip 12

If you want your machine to automatically reboot if it has a TRAP error, add the line

REIPL=ON to the end of your CONFIG.SYS.

Tip 13

Make a directory on your application drive for extra DLL and HELP files. Then add these directories to your LIBPATH and SET HELP lines in your CONFIG.SYS. This way, if you ever had to reinstall OS/2, you won't have to search around to find these extra system files or reinstall some OS/2 applications.

Tip 14

If you don't want to see the HELP information every time you open an OS/2 window or full screen session, change your prompt state-

ment to be SET PROMPT=[\$p].

Note: The following tips apply only to Warp 4 (Merlin).

Tip 15

Add the line SET SCKILLFEATUREENABLED=1 to provide a list of running processes that can be killed (when pressing CTRL and clicking on the task list button of the Warp Center).

Tip 16

Add the line SET SCUSEPRETTYCLOCK=ON to change the clock on the Warp Center to green numbers on a black background.

Tip 17

Add the line SET SCFINDUTILITY=C:\OS2\APPS\PMSEEK.EXE (or whatever search application you want) to run that instead of the default search utility.

Tip 18

Add the line SET SCCANBENUKED=1 to protect the Warp Center from being killed if the WPS is restarted (I have not verified this one!). ♦

Kevin Linfield is planning on taking over the world. To help him in his conquest, email him at linfield@iname.com.



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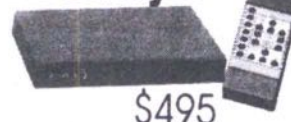
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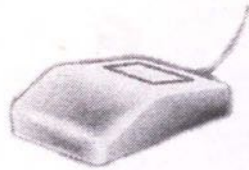
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Printer/font compatibility

Q: Why is my new printer printing type in the wrong font?

Paul MacShrink David Rosen replies: Oh, those sneaky printers! By printing "the wrong font" I'm assuming you mean that the font you selected in your document doesn't look like the font that your printer has printed. There are generally three reasons why your printer can do this to you.

First, the document you're trying to print may have been created using a font that is not installed in your Macintosh (or not properly installed in the Fonts folder within your Mac's System folder). This can be caused, for example, when you try to print a document that someone else has created on another Macintosh. To solve this problem, simply look to see if all the fonts used by your documents are installed and available to your application software. If any font is not there, install it or change the font in your document to something you have. Some application software programs such as Adobe PageMaker and Quark XPress are able to generate a list of all fonts used within a given document. This is especially helpful if you take your print job to a third-party service bureau to print.

Second, your document may contain an EPS (Encapsulated PostScript) graphic that was created using a font not installed in your System. This can happen with some types of

clip art and even when you download some graphics from the Internet. Again, the best solution is to ensure the font used in the EPS graphic is available to your Mac. Often, you'll need to ask whoever designed the particular graphic for the font name. Alternatively, some programs will alert you to the fact that a needed font is "missing" and recommend a substitute for you.

Desktop publishing (DTP) programs, for example, usually do this and even give you the choice of whether or not the font substitution is permanent or just temporary. It may be possible to use an EPS-based drawing program such as Adobe Illustrator to convert the text string to a graphic outline of the font. That way, you don't need to actually have the font installed in order to use it—at least for the short run.

Finally, if you're using an Apple bit-mapped font and have "font substitution" turned on in the print dialogue box, you might get strange results. Specifically, if you have a PostScript laser printer and you are using New York, for example, your Mac will attempt to print out a close approximation of Palatino (a PostScript savvy font) and not New York. Similarly, Geneva will print out an odd-looking version of Helvetica, and so on. To fix this problem, remember to format your documents in the fonts designed for your printer—in this case, a PostScript laser printer. Fonts that have city names (such as Geneva, London, Toronto or

San Francisco) are designed for inkjet printers and will print improperly on a laser printer.

Monitor balks at new OS

Q: I just came back from vacation and found the computer people have finally delivered my long-awaited System 7.6.1. The support rep dutifully installed the new software and checked everything out. The problem is that my Power Mac 7100 is no longer able to display high resolutions on my Apple 1710 monitor. What's going on?

Alex

MacShrink David Rosen replies: Dear Alex: Don't worry, nothing's broken. The problem is the way in which your new OS handles your hardware and it can be easily corrected using a patch from Apple. In fact, the problem you're describing is one common to all Power Macs with NuBus slots (including the Power Mac 6100, 7100, and 8100) and an Apple 1710 or Apple 1710AV monitor.

When the monitor is attached to the AV Display Connector (that's the one with five-count 'em-rows of pin holes), System 7.6.1 can't figure out how to display resolutions beyond the standard 640x480 pixels. Even

weirder is the fact that the Monitors and Sound control panel doesn't even give you a choice about things! No matter what you try, the dialogue box gives you no option of driving more pixels to your screen.

The solution, fortunately, is simple. You need to update the software for your Macintosh's monitor to AppleVision 1.5.3 (or greater). You can download this software from Apple's Web site at www.support.info.apple.com/ftp/7.6.1.html.

Best of all, it's free.

Banishing unwanted animation

Q: Can you tell how to get rid of the animations that run at the start of the games bundled with Warp 4? They were nice to watch the first time, but have now become boring and a waste of time.

Dan

Kevin Linfield responds: Not a problem. Just open the Settings for the game and deselect the button for playing the opening video.

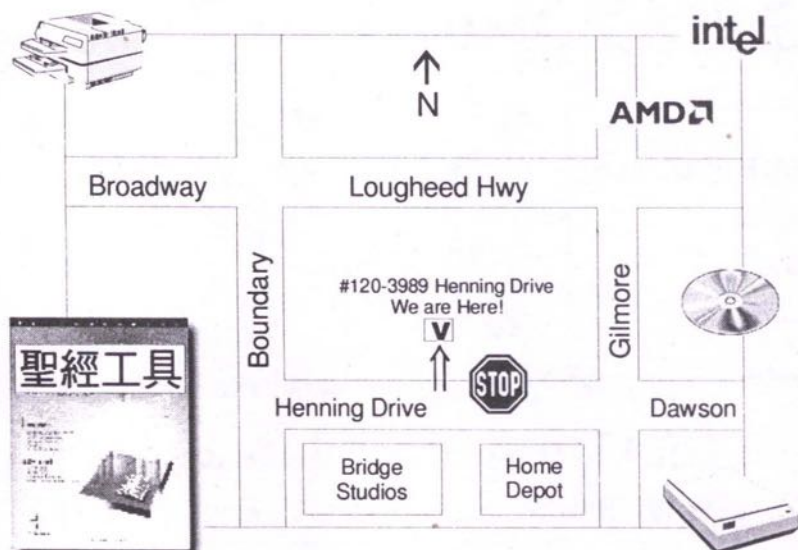
Which HPFS is for you?

Q: Do the terms "HPFS" and "386 HPFS" refer

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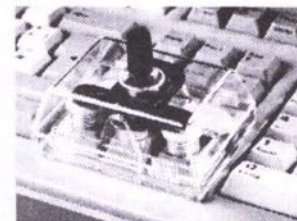
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You asked us...



continued from page 45

to the same thing? Or, is 386 HPFS the new and improved HPFS? What is the difference, if there is a difference, and where can I get more information?

Mike

Kevin Linfield responds: HPFS is OS/2's High Performance File System and as you have already noticed, there are two versions of it. OS/2 Client (Warp and Warp Connect) use an older, 16-bit version of the file system that was designed for OS/2 1.2 and is best for a client machine. The maximum disk cache under this version of HPFS is 2 MB.

Warp Server uses an enhanced 32-bit HPFS system designed for server applications (it includes user-access settings) and you can use a lot more disk cache (I believe up to 64 MB). Although it is possible to run 386HPFS under client OS/2 (if you have an extra Warp Server or LAN Server licence), IBM does not recommend it due to the additional overhead. People on the Internet have reported only a small (2 per cent) improvement when using 386HPFS under Warp Client.

Wipe the slate clean

Q: How on earth do I get OS/2 to do a real format of the hard drive during OS/2 installation for HPFS? The FASTFORMAT default just doesn't do it for me. I don't care how long it takes, I just want a clean hard drive for my OS/2

installation. Any ideas? Thanks.

William

Kevin Linfield responds: What you want to do is a long format, and you will most likely need to do this from the command prompt. When you are installing OS/2, after booting from the first two (or three) diskettes, press F3 to go to the command prompt. Then type (no quotes) "FORMAT C: /L" (or whatever drive you are installing OS/2 onto) for a long FAT format (use "FORMAT C: /FS:HPFS /L" for a long HPFS format). For more information on the format command, type "HELP FORMAT" from the OS/2 command prompt when the WorkPlace Shell is running.

Long name tangle

Q: I am using long filenames in my DeScribe documents and I want to copy some of them to floppies for storage. When I try to do this I get a message "Path/filename exceeded maximum length." I guess this is because of the FAT limitation, so is there a way to format the floppy HPFS or to copy these files without renaming all of them? Thanks.

Nancy

Kevin Linfield responds: What you are running into is the FAT file system's file length limit of 8.3 characters. If you copy files from the command prompt, there is no easy way around this (unless you use a compression program like ZIP to compress all of your files into one).

Lucky for OS/2 users, IBM invented the WorkPlace Shell. Simply open the folder that

contains your DeScribe documents and drag-and-drop them onto the floppy disk icon (in your Drives folder). OS/2 uses Extended Attributes to keep track of the long filename on the floppy disk, so if and when you copy them onto your (or a new) system, make sure you copy them from the WorkPlace Shell, not the command prompt. As for formatting floppy disks HPFS, some users have had limited success using third-party device drivers, but this is not a viable option for the average OS/2 user.

Shell vs. PM

Q: What is the difference between the WorkPlace Shell (WPS) and the Presentation Manager (PM)? I'm confused from your articles.

Peter

Kevin Linfield responds: The WorkPlace Shell is the object-oriented graphical user interface of OS/2 (2.0 and higher), which itself is a Presentation Manager program. It consists of all of your icons and how you can manipulate devices and objects by using the mouse.

The Presentation Manager is the graphical user interface for which OS/2 programs are written and programs can run. If you do not want to run the WPS, you can use a replacement shell (such as Program Commander/2 or MShell) to launch programs, including PM programs (i.e., you can run the Presentation Manager without the WorkPlace Shell, but you cannot run the WorkPlace Shell without the Presentation Manager.) Hope this helped!

Boot-disk camp

Q: Can I boot basically any operating system that fits onto just one floppy using this "boot DOS from A:" option? Thanks in advance.

Ronald

Kevin Linfield responds: While you can run many different operating systems through OS/2's Boot from drive A:, you cannot boot any protected-mode operating systems, such as Linux or Windows NT. You can, however, boot various flavours of DOS (including Windows 95's DOS) and even some variations of UNIX, including Minix.

Disappearing megs

Q: About three weeks ago, both of my computers, a 486/66 and a 486/33 with a gig hard drive I bought crashed on the same day. There was no virus. I fixed my 486/66 by using FDISK, and my 486/33's original hard drive using DOS 6.22 disks. A problem I encountered while trying to restore my 486/33's gig hard drive was that when I used FDISK, it restored only 127 of the 1,000 MB. When I displayed the hard drive, there was only 127. I'm looking for a way to get the other 900 MB. Please help.

K. Cheung

Alan Zisman replies: Sounds like a very bad day! The reality is that hard drives crash (I lost one over the summer, as well! Keep repeating "Back up frequently... back up frequently...").

It sounds like you're having the problem you describe because older PC computers are

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limited to supporting a maximum of 512 MB on an IDE drive. More recent computers have added LBA (Logical Block Addressing) support, enabling them to support today's large drives.

On older computers, you have two solutions:

- a hardware EIDE board that provides LBA support for older computers—a company called Promise Technologies, for example, makes a popular one.
- software such as OnTrack's DiskManager—often distributed along with hard drives—adds support for large drives.

It is possible that DiskManager (or equivalent) was in use before the crash, and needed to be reinstalled. It replaces the DOS FDISK, and provides the support you need. Note that many disk manufacturers distribute versions of DiskManager customized for their models—you may have problems borrowing a buddy's copy from another drive.

Disappearing Web graphics

Q: I tried to create a Web page using Word 97, and it looked fine on my computer, but when I got it uploaded onto my service provider's server, I can't see the background or the graphics.

Adam

Alan Zisman replies: This is one of the most common problems: pages that work on your hard drive, but don't when you upload them to your server. Typically, it's because the link to the graphic includes the drive and path information that worked on your computer (i.e., C:\My Folder\MYGRAPHIC.GIF) and when you put it onto the server, it obviously can't find it there.

The simplest (although ultimately messy) solution is to dump all the files into a single folder, and make sure that none of your links include any path/folder information. If they simply list MYGRAPHIC.GIF, they'll be found correctly.

Disappearing Mac?

Q: I've recently moved from an old Mac Plus to a Windows 95 machine. I've got a lot of files that I made on my Mac. Is there any way I can access them on my new machine?

Bill

Alan Zisman replies: You've got two problems: the first is getting your files onto a disk your PC can read, and the second is getting PC software that can read your Mac-created files.

While you can't use low-density floppies, luckily, Macs and PCs work with high-density floppies the same way, so if your Mac has a high-density drive (Apple called it a "Super-Drive"), you can simply copy all your files onto a Mac-formatted 1.44 MB diskette, or, using a Mac optional system utility called by various names like Apple File Exchange or PC Exchange, depending what version Mac system software you have, copy them onto PC-formatted floppies.

If you've copied them onto PC-formatted floppies, then you can generally open your Mac files in PC applications with the same name: PC versions of Microsoft Works, Excel, and Word, Claris Works, WordPerfect, and Adobe PageMaker, for example, can all open

files created in the Mac versions.

If you don't have compatible applications, or if you've got your files on Mac high-density diskettes, you need a translation utility for your PC. The best I've found is Conversions-Plus, now in version 4.0 from DataViz (www.dataviz.com). It lets you convert a huge

variety of file formats—both on a single platform, such as old PC word-processor formats like WordStar, and from Mac to PC. And it lets you read those high-density Mac floppies on your PC.

- Send Mac-related questions to MacShrink at

MacGuy@tcpon.com.

All questions become the property of MacShrink and David Rosen.

- Send OS/2 questions to Kevin Linfield at linfield@torfree.net.
- Send PC-related questions to Alan Zisman at azisman@rogers.wave.ca.

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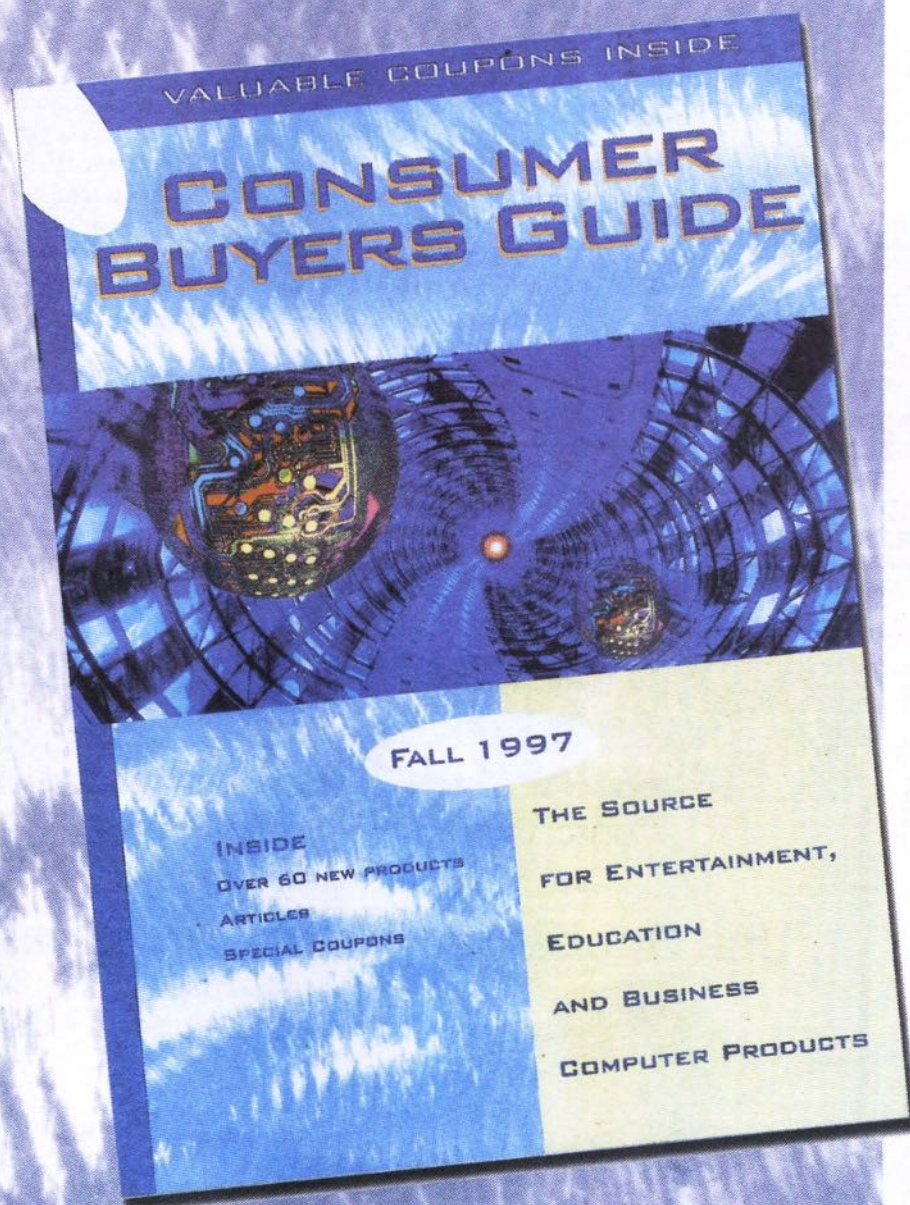
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Back to the '80s with arcade clones

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JROK
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 Moonrock Software
<http://www.oz.net/moonrock/qbob.html>
 Cheesy Software
<http://cheesy.simplenet.com/cheesy.htm>
 Kurt Dekker's Homepage
<http://users.deltanet.com/users/phixus/kgames>
 Champ Games
<http://www.champgames.com>

BY MARC SALTZMAN

I guess I've been writing a lot about "classic" coin-op arcade games lately because I'm going through a small age crisis. Yes, I know I'm only 27, but I long for the carefree days of my youth when commitment meant a date with Galaga, Tron, or Centipede at the Funland Arcade every Saturday at noon.

If any of you twenty- or even thirtysomethings reading this also experience that fuzzy,

nostalgic feeling when thinking back to the good 'ol days of Duran Duran, Donkey Kong, and Miami Vice, then the Web has what you crave.

The following are some of the best "classic" arcade game clones on the Net or clever imitations of past hits with a '90s twist.

Big Pac attack

Pacman and Ms. Pacman fans must download some stunning versions from JROK that are nearly identical to the smash hits released over a decade ago. PacPC 2.0 is a major upgrade from the last incarnation and features a large screen area, a custom full-screen mode of play, better graphics, sound samples of 16 KHz, and improved joystick support. Ms. PacPC 1.02 is also a perfect replica of the femme fatale sequel, including all the intermissions, all the fruit, and all the sounds.

Each game allows for high score saves plus the option to play in turbo mode! The best part of all is that these two addictive diversions are absolutely free.

There are a handful of good

Q-Bert clones on the Web nowadays (one on JROK's site, as well!), but the most enjoyable version has to be Q-Bob from Moonrock software. This shareware title allows gamers to indulge in a handful of challenging levels where you must navigate our hero "Bob" around all the cubes and avoid the freaky aliens.

The game includes high-quality 256-colour graphics, all original music, bizarre sound effects, support for up to four players on one machine and you can post your high score on the Web for the whole world to see. Concerned parents have the option to turn the "violence" off, but I'm sure most of you will enjoy the grotesque cinematics if Bob gets caught!

Q-Bob runs on Microsoft Windows 3.1, Windows 95, and Windows NT 3.51 (or higher).

The cheese is ripe

Cheesy Software has created

two very silly versions of the retro games Space Invaders and Centipede—and a warning: they are deceptively addictive (I've tried getting my girlfriend to stop playing—sure!).

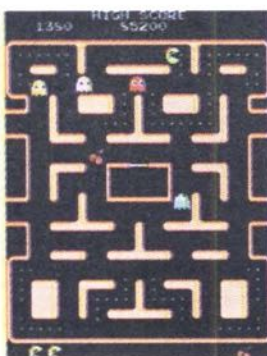
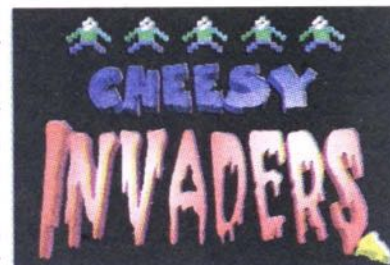
Both are more than take-offs from the original coin-ops—each has completely new graphics, original sounds and music, and many customizable features.

Make sure you visit Jeff's "Coming Soon"

page and take a peek at parodies of Asteroids, Frogger, and Cheesy Invaders '97 in the works. As with JROK's creations, these titles are freeware, so knock yourself out.

Kurt Dekker's name may be familiar to those who have sought out PC versions of games played during the Reagan administration. In his spare time from working as a programmer (he worked on the award-winning SimCity Enhanced CD-ROM and now is employed with software giant Interplay), Kurt was one of the first to code copies of classics such as Frogger, Rally X, Missile

continued on page 52



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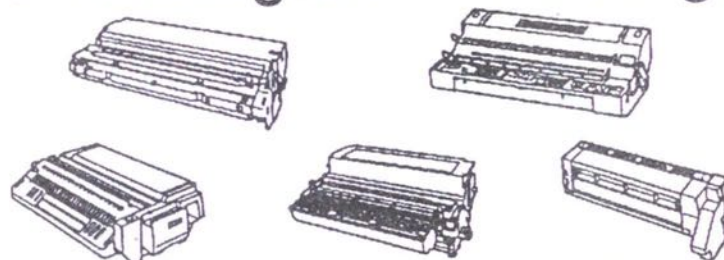
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BY MARC SALTZMAN

Right off the bat, I want to make sure we're on the same wavelength here. With literally thousands of great computer game-related Web sites on the Internet, it would be presumptuous and downright ignorant for me to pin a ribbon only on a select few. Therefore, this list will simply highlight a half-dozen of the more comprehensive, resourceful, and attractive gaming e-zines (electronic magazines) or Web counterparts to paper magazines covering all genres of gameplay. Please keep in mind they are not listed in any particular order, and sites that are mainly shareware archives, such as Happy Puppy or Games Domain, are not covered here.

Gamespot

This beautiful San Francisco-based e-zine has just revamped the graphics on its site to make the load time considerably faster (one major complaint from surfers with slower modems). Gamespot is a colourful, newspaper-like site that caters to the diehard gaming enthusiast. Although it covers many areas of gameplay, its feature sections, strategy guides, and game reviews are its strong points.

It also recently joined forces with the popular paper magazine *Computer Gaming World* with the right to publish its discerning editorial content. Console gamers should check out its sister site, VideoGamespot.



Gamecenter

Also in San Fran, and part of the larger and well-respected C-Net family, Gamecenter is a very thorough and hard-hitting (yet fun) Web publication for computer- and console-game

fans. Its comic book layout and keen writing attracts about a half million visitors a day. Wow!

Gamecenter has a more laid back approach to reviews and feature sections (with more personality than Gamespot), but its news cover-

age, hardware subdivision, game guides, and extensive Sneak Peak area should be taken
 continued on page 52

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May 6, 1997
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"Providing the best of both worlds, CSI... delivers what we have come to expect from an online service while giving us complete and easy access to the Internet and so earns our Editors' Choice award."

— PC Magazine,
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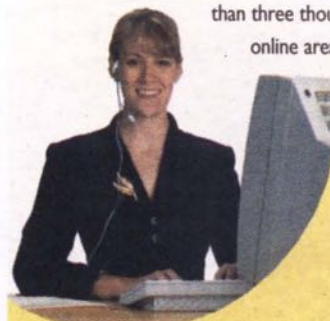
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Great gaming sites

continued from page 51

seriously. Great downloads and cheat codes are also available here.

Adrenaline Vault

Any Web site that pays as much attention to the online Quake culture as Adrenaline Vault gets thumbs up in my book. Besides coverage of Quake add-ons and total conversions, this site has really made strides in the past year, focusing strongly on game reviews, previews, news, interviews, and the latest game demos available.

Its trademark black and purple trimmings and sleek interface make Adrenaline Vault an informative, futuristic read. Also check out one of its off-shoot publications, Elite Games, for excellent 3D gaming coverage.

Gamesmania

This Toronto-based e-zine has been kicking some virtual butt since it debuted on the Web a little over a year ago. Talk about expansion—the site now publishes content in four languages besides English: German, Japanese, Portuguese, and Italian. Gamesmania's strengths are in its feature stories, game previews, reviews, and in the downloads department (it offers hundreds of cool movie-like trailers to games besides demos and patches!).

Another distinct addition to the Gamesmania family is a subset of 12 sister pages devoted to hot current or upcoming games, such as Starcraft, Diablo, Quake II, and Command & Conquer: Red Alert, to name a few.

PC Gamer

PC Gamer is the only site mentioned here that has a paper counterpart, which also happens to be the number-one selling computer-game magazine in the world. As with Gamespot, this site caters to very serious computer gamers and is best-known for its daily news,

Back to the 80s

continued from page 50

Command, Defender, and Lunar Lander, to name a few. All 12 of his small shareware games are available at his site and are tiny downloads—you can even fit them all on one floppy diskette!

Reasonable facsimiles

The last batch of arcade clones I'll mention are designed from the ground-up by Champ Programming and they house a hearty catalog of favorites such as Galaxian, Centipede, Frogger, Donkey Kong, Burger Time, Galaga, Space Invaders, Pacman, and Ms. Pacman.

The good news is that they are excellent facsimiles of their predecessors and the downloads are extremely small, averaging 240KB or so. The downside to all this is that this is shareware, so you'll only get a couple of levels per game and then you must shell out roughly US\$15 for the code to unlock the full game. Most games ship with both "classic" and "champ" mode (new graphics and other features), support for joysticks and two players, and will run on most older PC systems (386 or 486). ♦

feature sections, archived game reviews, "downloads of the day," and upcoming game coverage in development.

Unfortunately, its strategy department is not up to date, but game walkthroughs, cheat codes, and guides to older titles are all listed. Check out its enormous Quake II screenshot

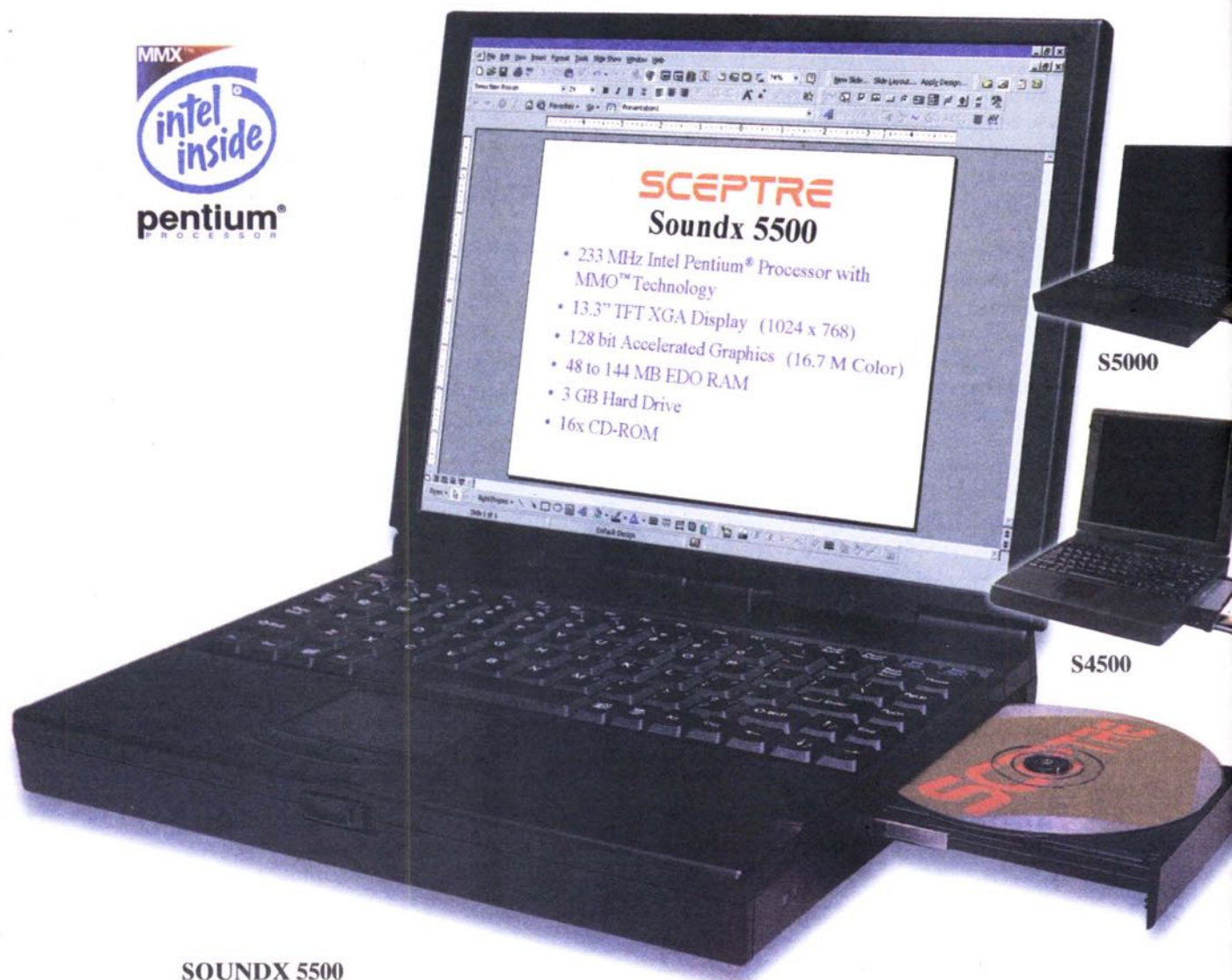
gallery while you're here.

Gamepen

To round off this six-pack of great online PC gaming publications is Gamepen—one of the oldest and highly regarded sites of the bunch. Gamepen knocked our socks off with its

relentless E3 coverage this year, but its regular sections are equally as impressive: news, exclusive features, game reviews, previews, and "group therapy" area. Gamepen is part of the larger Unified Gamers Online group—a definite must for PC and console game fanatics with an Internet connection. Enjoy! ♦

Expand Your (without collapsing your



SOUNDX 5500

Caution, giants merging

BY SAUL CHERNOS

America Online is set to acquire fellow

Internet service provider (ISP) CompuServe Online Services pending approval by U.S. regulators.

The transaction involves a complex trading of assets. It began with H&R Block announcing the sale in early September of

its majority holding of CompuServe Corp. shares to WorldCom Inc., a U.S. network and telecommunications services provider.

Within a day, WorldCom turned around and exchanged CompuServe's Internet Services division to Dulles, Virginia-based AOL in return for ANS Communications Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of AOL that provides high-level network services. AOL also stands to receive US\$175 million from the deal, which it estimates is worth \$425 million.

"We are comfortable and confident that the deal will be approved," AOL spokesperson Rich D'Amato told *The Computer Player*. "We knew from the beginning that it could take six months to close, though we all agree the sooner the better."

Adding CompuServe's 2.6 million users to AOL's nine million, boosts the latter's standing as the largest ISP in the world.

Unique identities

AOL has more than 100,000 users in Canada, and while the CompuServe acquisition will add another 80,000 Canadian subscribers to the AOL fold, D'Amato says the two services will remain distinct. "People will continue to receive the same services," he says. "We intend to operate CompuServe as a separate brand."

D'Amato says CompuServe will retain its Columbus, Ohio, headquarters, but acknowledged there could be other changes if the sale is approved.

"Somewhere down the line we'll be looking at what can be shared in terms of content and technologies in order to enhance the experience of our members," D'Amato says.

As well, AOL won't be making any decisions regarding content or technology until the transaction is approved, according to D'Amato.

CompuServe spokesperson Steve Conway also says the two services would remain distinct. He adds that CompuServe was busy beefing up its Canadian content prior to the announcement, and will continue to do so.

Bad tidings?

Jesse Hirsh, a Toronto media activist, says the agreement increases the corporate concentration of media and communications ownership and is especially dangerous because governments are allowing companies to regulate themselves.

"Under the banner of convergence, the telecommunications industry is consolidating itself and accumulating substantial political power as the landlord of the global information society," Hirsh says. "If a government regulates the Internet, there are so-called democratic means by which you can challenge that. However, when corporations regulate themselves, there aren't any democratic means to challenge them." ♦

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熱量與電腦的關係(一)

作者：林啓清(JimLin)

一、前言

熱量這種東西在半導體(IC及CPU這類皆是屬於半導體)的世界裡，一直是佔著很重要的地位？太熱或太冷都會讓半導體罷

工....但大多數的人都不知道這個嚴重性？

電腦的後面有一個風扇(相信有用的電腦的人都知道)，在CPU的上面也有一個小的散熱風扇(有拆過電腦的人應該也會知道)？



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很明顯的，這些風扇都是為了散熱而裝的？

但是絕大多數的人(包括電腦公司的工程師)都只知道應該裝個風扇，但卻不知道就是一個小小的風扇對電腦本身起了多大的影響？

您的電腦會有以下的情形嗎？

- 1) 有時候無法開機
- 2) 剛開很好，開一段時間後就會當機
- 3) 剛開會當機，開一段時間就會好了

如果很不幸您的電腦有以上的任何一條，那表示您那部電腦已經受傷了？

如果您的電腦是全新才買來的... 那有可能是裝配不良？

更不幸的是，當您把電腦搬到電腦店請求協助時，往往搬去就沒事，搬回來就不行？

二、半導體

對於非電子本科的人來說，對於半導體這種東西是很陌生的？

半導體這種東西怕冷怕熱(很麻煩吧)，但在室溫下是沒有問題的？

但是有些半導體在工作時會發出很高的熱量，這種熱量極有可能造成半導體本身的熱跑脫(燒毀)，或是接近熱跑脫臨界點時，半導體會先出現不穩定的現象？

就大家所熟知的CPU就是一個發出熱量最高的半導體？這就是為什麼要在CPU的上面加上一個散熱片及散熱風扇了？

另外，記憶體(RAM)也會發出蠻高的熱量，但是卻沒有人替RAM加裝散熱片？

除了安裝不易之外，RAM並

不屬於瞬間產生高熱的零件，而是屬於熱量累積的零件？

也就是說，RAM的附近應該要保持空間，讓空氣能夠流通，否則當熱量逐漸累積，您的電腦不當機也難？

另外一個比較麻煩的是CPU上面的散熱風扇，並不是直接把熱排到機殼外面，而是排在機殼裡面？所以全部的熱量都在機殼裡面流動，如果機殼無法適時的把這些熱量排出機殼外，那下場也是只有當機一途(或是造成零件的損壞或不穩定)！

除了這些大家所熟知的主要零件外，差不多所有的界面擴充卡裡面都含有記憶體？

而前面提過，RAM是屬於熱量累積型的零件，不留意機殼內的界面卡配置，也會影響到整體的散熱效果？

對於瞬間產生高熱的零件(像CPU)必須在該零件一開始工作就要開始散熱。

至於屬於熱量累積型的零件(像RAM)則必須適時的把熱量移走，否則會馬上變成高熱型的零件？

而熱量累積型的零件，它的熱量累積並不是成線性的？例如，第一秒鐘是10度，第二秒可能變成20度，第三秒可能變成50度，第四秒可能變成150度....

所以，不管是屬於那一種零件，只要它會發熱，我們就必須把熱量一直用風扇抽走。

另一個被忽略的是，有些零件本身可能不會發出很高的熱量，但是卻很容易受外界的溫度而改變它的工作特性(其實這就是半導體的特性)，這也是我們需要風扇一直把熱空氣抽走的原因了？

電腦主機板上有大量的半導體，唯讀光碟機(CDROM)、硬碟機(HD)、軟碟機(FD)等都含有半導體控制板。

沒有什麼東西不怕熱，因為都含有大量的半導體？

當您摸機殼外面覺得有點溫溫的，不要以為那是小事？外面溫溫的，您知道機殼裡面可能溫度已經高到可以煎蛋了... :-)

三、CASE只是CASE嗎

對於不懂電腦的人，他們會挑選好看的外殼，這是無可厚非？

但對於略懂電腦的人，應該是挑選一個散熱設計良好的機殼？

電腦機殼的功能並不只是保護裡面脆弱的電路板，而有一個更重要的任務，那就是及時的把可能傷內部電路板的熱量給抽走？

所以，您必須經一定要留意電腦後面的風扇有沒有在轉(會故障)，否則電腦是怎麼死的您都不知道？

以現在的技術水準，所有的電腦應該都可以長時

間開機(因為用了許多低熱量的零件)？

如果您的電腦不行，回想一下... 當初您在買該部電腦時，是不是有殺價... :-)

四、結語

生意，當您殺價殺得很高興不知道哦？

當....;Q

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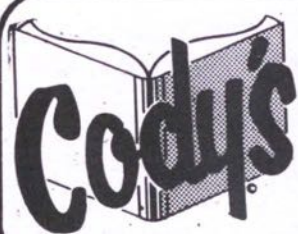


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逢星期二休息，歡迎電話查詢

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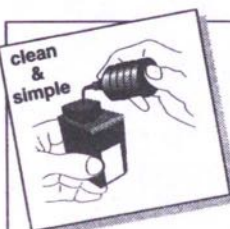
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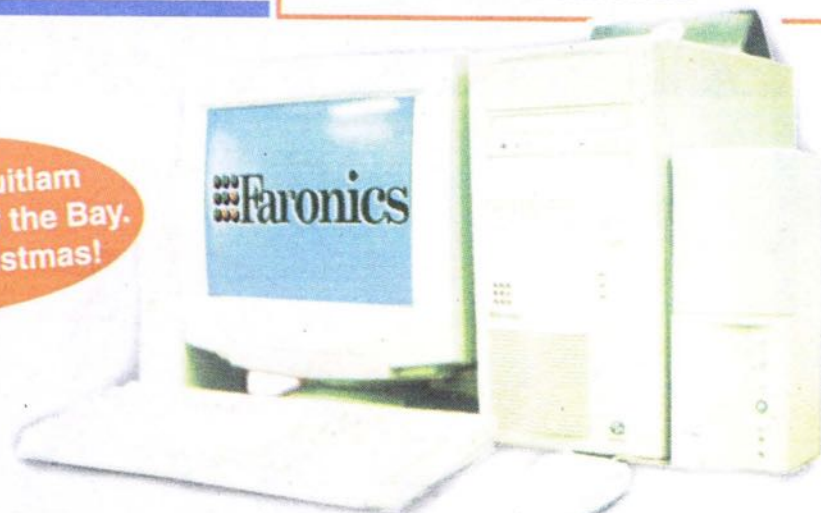
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- PA-2007 1MB Cache MMX Motherboard
- Intel Pentium 166 MMX Processor
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- 16MB EDO RAM (2 x 8MB Modules)
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- 2MB Cirrus Logic 5446 Video Card w/Software MPEG
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- 3D Surround Sound Card
- Labtec LCS-1014 Speakers
- Flash Rom Bios
- Enhanced IDE Controller, Mode 4
- 2 High Speed Serial Ports & Enhanced Parallel Port
- Enhanced Windows 95 Keyboard
- Microsoft Mouse with Mouse Pad
- Faronics Mini-Tower Case, CSA Approved Power Supply

INCLUDES

- 15" KTX Monitor, NI, Low Radiation, .28dpi

ALSO INCLUDES

- Microsoft Windows 95 OSR2 Release with CD & Manual
- Microsoft Internet Explorer
- Microsoft Works, Microsoft Encarta 97, Microsoft Cinemania 97, Microsoft Golf, Microsoft 3D Works, Microsoft Game Sampler
- Lotus SmartSuite: Word Pro, Lotus 1-2-3, Organizer, Freelance, Approach, Screen Cam
- Norton Anti-Virus

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Faronics 5166MMX32

- PA-2007 1MB Cache MMX Motherboard
- Intel Pentium 166 Processor with MMX Technology
- 3.2GB Ultra IDE Hard Drive
- 32MB EDO RAM (2 x 16MB Modules)
- 1.44MB Floppy Drive
- 16X CD-ROM Drive, 32Bit
- S3 Virge 3D Video Card 2MB
- U.S. Robotics 33.6 Data Fax Modem Internal
- 3D Surround Sound Card
- Labtec LCS-1224 Speakers
- Flash Rom Bios
- Enhanced IDE Controller, Mode 4
- 2 High Speed Serial Ports & Enhanced Parallel Port
- Enhanced Windows 95 Keyboard
- Microsoft Mouse with Mouse Pad
- Faronics Mini-Tower Case, CSA Approved Power Supply

INCLUDES

- 15" KTX Monitor, NI, Low Radiation, .28dpi

ALSO INCLUDES

- Microsoft Windows 95 OSR2 Release with CD & Manual
- Microsoft Internet Explorer
- Norton Anti-Virus

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Faronics Performer Plus System

Faronics 5200MMX32

- PA-2007 1MB Cache MMX Motherboard
- Intel Pentium 200 Processor with MMX Technology
- 4.3GB Ultra IDE Hard Drive
- 32MB EDO RAM (2 x 16MB Modules)
- 1.44MB Floppy Drive
- 16X CD-ROM Drive, 32Bit
- Diamond Stealth 4MB EDO Video Card w/Games & Encyclopedia
- U.S. Robotics 33.6 Data Fax Modem Internal
- 3D Surround Sound Card
- Labtec LCS-1224 Speakers
- Flash Rom Bios
- Enhanced IDE Controller, Mode 4
- 2 High Speed Serial Ports & Enhanced Parallel Port
- Enhanced Windows 95 Keyboard
- Microsoft Mouse with Mouse Pad
- Faronics Mid-Tower Case, CSA Approved Power Supply

INCLUDES

- 17" KTX Monitor, NI, Low Radiation, .28dpi

ALSO INCLUDES

- Microsoft Windows 95 OSR2 Release with CD & Manual
- Microsoft Internet Explorer
- Norton Anti-Virus

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Faronics Dream Machine

Faronics 5000 Platinum Series Dream Machine 97 PII233MMX32SD

- Intel LX Chipset Pentium II MMX Motherboard
- Intel Pentium II 233 Processor with MMX Technology
- 7.0GB Ultra IDE Hard Drive
- 32MB SDRAM (1 x 32MB Module)
- 1.44MB Floppy Drive
- 24X CD-ROM Drive, 32Bit
- Diamond Stealth 3D 4MB Video Card PCI 64-bit
- U.S. Robotics 56K Data Fax Modem Internal
- 3D Surround Sound Card Full Duplex
- Labtec LCS-1224 Speakers
- Flash Rom Bios
- Ultra DMA IDE Controller, PS/2 Ports, Two USB Ports
- 2 High Speed Serial Ports & Enhanced Parallel Port
- Enhanced Windows 95 Keyboard
- Microsoft Mouse with Mouse Pad
- Faronics ATX Mid-Tower Case, CSA Approved Power Supply

INCLUDES

- 17" KTX Monitor, NI, Low Radiation, .28dpi

ALSO INCLUDES

- Microsoft Windows 95 OSR2 Release OEM with CD & Manual
- Microsoft Internet Explorer
- Gravis Multiplayer Grip Game System with Triple Play 97
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- Sega Virtual Fighter Video Game OEM
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PA-2007 1MB Cache \$145

"With a 200 Mhz CPU, this board reaches a performance as high as other boards with 512KB cache and a 233Mhz Processor...It is currently the Fastest Socket -7 Board on the market."

PC Professionell, Ziff Davis Magazine, August 1997

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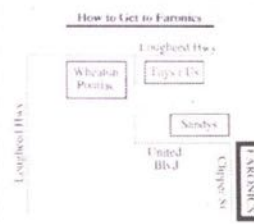
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